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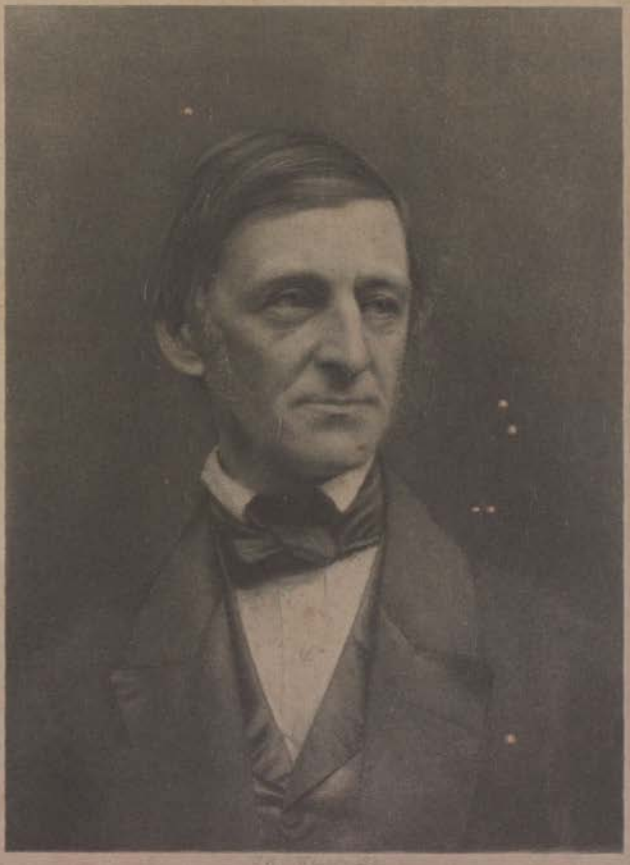

EMERSON IN CONCORD

A Memoir

WRITTEN FOR THE "SOCIAL CIRCLE" IN CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS

BY

EDWARD WALDO EMERSON

LONDON:
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON,
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Not his the feaster's wine,
Nor gold, nor land, nor power;
By want and pain God screeneth him
Till his appointed hour.
Go, speed the stars of thought
On to their shining goals;
The sower scatters broad his seed,
The wheat thou strew'st be souls.

I want to tell you something, Gentlemen. Eternity is very long. Opportunity is a very little portion of it, but worth the whole of it. If God gave me my choice of the whole planet or my little farm, I should certainly take my farm.

MR. EMERSON'S JOURNAL FOR 1852.

EMERSON IN CONCORD.

"God, when He made the prophet, did not unmake the man." — LOCKE.

IT has been the good and time-honored practice of the SOCIAL CIRCLE to preserve in its book as true a picture as may be of the life of each departed member. Thus the task fell to me of writing for the chronicles of his village club the story of my father.

His friend Mr. Cabot has written this story for the world. Everything was put into his hands, and he made good and true and loyal use of the trust.

I write for my father's neighbors and near friends, though I include many who perhaps never saw him. His public life and works have been so well told and critically estimated by several good and friendly hands that I pass lightly over them, to show to those who care to see, more fully than could be done in Mr. Cabot's book consistently with its symmetry, the citizen and villager and householder, the friend and neighbor. And if I magnify, perhaps unduly, this aspect of my fa-

ther, it is to show those whom his writings have helped or moved that his daily life was in accord with his teachings.

I ask attention to the spirit even more than the matter of the extracts from his journals here given. These were chosen, but a hundred others would serve as well. It is now imputed as a shortcoming that he did not do justice to the prevailing power of evil in the world. Fortunately he did not. It was not the message given to him. He could not. For that which made him live and serve and love and be loved was — a good Hope.

In the ancient graveyard at Ipswich, in this State, lies buried Thomas Emerson, the first of the name in this country, who came among the very early settlers to Massachusetts Bay, probably from the neighborhood of Durham, in northeastern England. He is styled Thomas Emerson, Baker. His son, Joseph, took a step onward, and dispensed the bread of life to the settlers of Mendon, and took a Concord woman to wife, namely, Elizabeth Bulkeley, daughter of the second and granddaughter of the first minister of this town.

But their son, Edward, in spite of — perhaps because of — this priestly ancestry, relapsed to things of this world, and was for a time a "Merchant in Charlestown," though on his gravestone

it was thought fitter to call him "sometime Deacon of the church in Newbury."

His son, Joseph, was the minister of Malden; strengthened the religious tendency of the family by marrying the daughter of the famous and eccentric Father Moody, of York (Agamenticus), Maine, and this couple, out of their numerous family, gave three young ministers to the Colony, of whom one of the youngest, William, came, as his diary records, often on horseback to Concord to preach for Dr. Bliss, and when that zealous preacher died was chosen his successor. The young minister, only twenty-two years old, boarded with Madam Bliss, and soon won the affection of her daughter Phebe, bought the fields, pasture and hill at the bend of the Musketaquid, soon to become famous, and built the Manse, where his children were born in the next ten years, during which this earnest and patriotic man strove to do his duty to his parish and his country, and to strengthen the hearts and hands of his flock in days the gloom of which only the bright light of patriotism and trust in God could dispel. The first great crisis of the struggle came, and in his own town. At the alarm before daylight of the April morning, the young minister answered the call, and on the village common did his best to uphold the courage of his townsfolk and parishioners and their trust in their good cause. The first volleys of the war were

exchanged by the royal troops and provincials across the little bridge close by his house. Next year he joined the army at Ticonderoga as chaplain, and sickened and died at Rutland of camp-fever. He left several daughters and one son, William, who graduated at Harvard College in 1789, and afterward was settled as minister in the village of Harvard, Mass., whither he brought Miss Ruth Haskins of Boston to be his wife. She was a lady of unfailing sweetness and serenity, but also of courage and quiet strength, for which later she had need. In 1799 Mr. Emerson was urgently called from the quiet village among the Worcester County hills to take charge of the First Church in Boston. The society worshipped in the Old Brick Church in Cornhill, but in 1808 built a new one in Chauncy Place, and the parsonage was close by on Summer Street. Here, where Hovey's great store now stands, the Emersons lived among scattered mansions surrounded by enclosed gardens, with vacant fields near by and a view of the harbor and shipping below, where

> "Twice a day the flowing sea
> Took Boston in its arms."

Here all but one of their eight children were born. A little Phebe Ripley had been born in Harvard, and died the year after the family removed to the city. The seven little people that soon after claimed a birthright in Boston were:

John Clarke (born 1799), William (born 1801), Ralph Waldo (born May 25, 1803), Edward Bliss (born 1805), Robert Bulkeley (born 1807), Charles Chauncy (born 1808), and Mary Caroline (born 1811). The eldest, John Clarke, died in childhood, as did also the little sister, a sad chance for her brothers. Bulkeley, though a pleasant boy, always remained childish in mind, and was therefore dependent on his brothers, and a source of anxiety to them. The future history of William, Edward, and Charles will be mentioned in connection with the later fortunes of their brother Waldo.

But to return to the father of this family. Mr. Emerson was a cheerful and social man, of literary taste and skill. Besides writing a history of his church and making a collection of hymns, he was for years editor of the Monthly Anthology, a journal in which the best men of letters of the day in Boston and Cambridge were interested, and which died with him. He was one of the founders of the Ministers' Library, afterwards merged in the Boston Athenæum. Both he and his father, William of Concord, valued and were esteemed in their day for eloquence. Both of these men seem to have been more interested in the central ethics of Christianity than in the grim doctrines in which it had been enveloped, and in spite of the reaction towards Calvinism which Whitefield's eloquence and Edwards's fire had produced in many New Eng-

land churches, did not emphasize Grace in their sermons, but appealed to the virtue and good sense of their people in the name of God: —

> "For faith and truth and mighty love,
> Which from the Godhead flow,
> Showed them the life in heaven above
> Springs from the life below." [1]

Of William Emerson of Boston his son says: "I think I observe in his writings . . . a studied reserve on the subject of the nature and offices of Jesus. They had not made up their minds on it. It was a mystery to them, and they let it remain so." In view of the son's shrinking from all attempts to wall in the living truth with forms, his father's early wish and hope, while still in Harvard, of moving to Washington, and there founding a church without written expression of faith or covenant, is worthy of note. The humor and the affectionate and domestic expressions in my father's letters to his family and nearest friends often strangely recall the letters of his father and grandfather to those of their own household, which were familiar and often witty and playful to a degree remarkable in New England correspondence of those days, usually stiffened with formality and crowded with religious exhortation to the exclusion of aught else human. Whether his duties as

[1] Hymn by Mr. Emerson at the ordination of his successor, Rev. Chandler Robbins.

preacher, pastor, editor and social citizen occupied Mr. Emerson's time so much that he could spare little to his children, or that Ralph was, as some children are, too much wrapped up in his childish reveries and experiments to notice early his elders except when required to do so, probably from both causes, the son had very little recollection of his father, although it appears in the family letters that Ralph's education had begun before he was three, at the "dame school," and that his father, when at home, required that William and Ralph, aged respectively five and three, should recite to him before breakfast a sentence of English grammar. Yet so dull was the younger that it stands recorded by his father, a week before his third birthday, that Ralph does not read very well.

Poetry and Letters came hand in hand with Art to meet the little scholar, for in later years my father wrote to his friend, Rev. William Furness of Philadelphia, "My wife reads you and venerates you: then I brag that I went to school with him to Miss Nancy Dickson, and spelt out The House that Jack Built on his red handkerchief."

Rev. William Emerson died in May, 1811, in middle life. Of this event my father only could remember, with a little boy's interest and pride, the stateliness of the funeral, at which the Ancient and Honorable Artillery escorted to the grave the body of their late chaplain.

Mrs. Emerson found herself a widow, with a family of five little boys to be provided for, William, the eldest, being but ten years old, and Ralph Waldo but eight. To a woman of her stamp provision for her sons meant far more than mere food, raiment and shelter. Their souls first, their minds next, their bodies last: this was the order in which their claims presented themselves to the brave mother's mind. They must be pious and dutiful for their eternal welfare; and then the traditions of the family in all its branches required that they should be well read and instructed, and Harvard College was the gate through which many of their ancestors had gone to the storehouses of godly knowledge, which it was, to her mind, the highest function of a man to dispense to less favored souls. Lastly, in those days the body had to look after itself very much: more reverently they put it, The Lord will provide.

Her husband's friends and parishioners and the relatives did what they could to help the family of their dead pastor. The church with great generosity continued the salary six months, and voted to pay five hundred dollars a year for seven years, so the family were in no immediate distress. Mrs. Emerson stayed in the parsonage, and her husband's successor boarded with her, but did not live long; and when Mr. Frothingham was settled as minister, Mrs. Emerson moved, first, I believe, to

Atkinson Street and then to a house on Beacon Hill, and supported her family by taking boarders. The boys appear to have taken care of the vestry. They helped as they could in domestic matters, but they were expected to lose as little time as might be from reading and writing. There seems to have been little play. To their books they took as ducklings to water. When some one spoke of their progress, their aunt said, "Sir, they were born to be educated." And it would be hard to overestimate the effect upon these young minds of this same proud, pious, eccentric, exacting, inspiring Aunt Mary Moody Emerson. She had been adopted in her infancy by relatives so poor that they lived in constant fear of the sheriff. She had been trained in hardship and sordid poverty, far from cultivated society, and under religious influences mainly Calvinistic, but she had managed to go through a wider range of books than most clergymen of her day, with a sure taste for superior writing and a judgment most critical. Though exacting in her standards of conduct, and often exasperatingly frank in her criticisms of her friends, her pride in and real affection for her young relations, and interests not only lofty but broad, commanded their loyal affection. Their mother was a serene and ennobling presence in the house; their aunt a spur, or, better, a ferment in their young lives, and one that was never inert, for she made frequent visits

to her relations, and, in whatever remote part of New England she might be boarding, her letters, by every opportunity of travelling minister or friend, incited her nephews to the search for wisdom or pursuit of virtue, and required of them an account of their progress. She guided their reading and made them think about it. She stimulated them by discussion, rallied them on their young vanities, and by this very correspondence trained them in reasoning and expression. Of her, her nephew wrote thus: "She gave high counsels. It was the privilege of certain boys to have this immeasurably high standard indicated to their childhood, a blessing which nothing else in education could supply." "Lift your aims;" "Always do what you are afraid to do;" "Scorn trifles;"— such were the maxims she gave her nephews, and which they made their own.

The contrast between the lives of children then and now is almost painfully shown in the earnest letters from William Emerson and his wife, giving directions as to the discipline and instructions of little John Clarke, the oldest child, to some relatives in Waterford, Maine, with whom he was to pass a year.

After the dame schools, my father went for a short time to the grammar school, taught by Mr. Lawson Lyon, a severe master, who wielded not the birch in vain. Among his schoolmates was John Marston, later a commodore in the U. S. Navy.

In 1813, Ralph, as he was called until he left college, when he chose to be called Waldo, entered the Latin School, and received there most of his official schooling from Master Benjamin Gould until he entered college. Before he was ten years old he made two friends for life, William H. Furness, already mentioned, and Samuel Bradford, — the one a distinguished Unitarian clergyman, the other an esteemed man of affairs. Both survived him. Ralph wrote verses, nonsensical and ambitious by turns, modelled on those of the English authors of the eighteenth century, usually correct in rhyme and metre, full of high-flown but conventional expressions. One of these, an epic entitled "The History of Fortus, a Chivalric Poem, in one volume, complete; with Notes, Critical and Explanatory, by R. W. Emerson, LL. D.," [1] was written

[1] When overwhelming multitudes of warriors, reinforced by two fire-breathing dragons, rush upon the wearied knight —

"Fortus beholds — recovers breath,
Then arms to do the work of death,
Then like a Lion bounding o'er his foes
Swift as the lightning he to combat goes.

. . . . . .

Six score and twenty thousand 'gan the fray,
Six score alone survived that dreadful day.
Ah! hear the groans of those that bled
In that sad plain o'erlaid with dead.
Fortus, who would not quit the field,
Till every foe was forced to yield,
To tender pity now transformed his wrath.
And from the bloody field pursued his path."

when he was ten years old, and "embellished with elegant Engravings," by his friend William Furness. The notes, added three years later, are of an amusing severity. But chiefly the prowess of the United States frigates in the war then going on was the inspiring theme. He remembered well Captain Lawrence's sailing out with a raw crew and imperfect equipment, to accept the challenge of battle sent in by the commander of the Shannon, and seeing the Boston people on the roofs watching anxiously that disastrous fight in the bay. He answered with his schoolmates the call for volunteers to do some shovelling on the works at Noddle's Island, but could not remember that any actual work was done by the boys. These old days are recalled in his letter to his ever-loyal friend, Dr. Furness, in 1838: —

"It is the pleasure of your affection and nobleness to exaggerate always the merits of your friends. I know the trait of old, from Mr. Webb's school onwards, and so delight now as much as then in the smiles and commendations of my Mæcenas. But how can you keep so good a nature from boy to man? Nobody but you and my brother Edward would praise the verses to the immortal Hull,[1] nor could be induced, though I read them never so often. And now the case is scarcely altered; everybody thinks my things shocking but you and

[1] One of the youthful lyrics in honor of the navy.

a few generous hearts who must be to me for Edward. I love to know you are there."

The allusion to Mr. Webb's school, a writing school on the other side of the Common from the grammar school, to attend which Ralph was dismissed for the last hour of the morning, recalls a fall from virtue which must be chronicled, since an English biographer complains that Mr. Emerson, with his eyes open, "chose to lead a life of absolute conformity to the moral law." From this school — I have heard his own confession — he deliberately and continuously played truant, and enjoyed the stolen hours on the Common till such time as was needed for "sorrow, dogging sin," in the shape of bread-and-water confinement (probably devoted to making verses), to run down its prey.

Against the notion that his boyhood was absolutely empty of that on which most boys live, these imperfect notes, from a journal, must have their weight: —

"Affectionate recollections of going into water after school in Charles Street, and the plafond view of rope-walks. What dangers turned us pale at a panic of North-Enders, South-Enders, Round-Pointers! Sea-fencibles and the soldiery of 1813, and Noddle's Island. The pride of local knowledge of the Extinguisher, Dispatch and Cataract fire-engines. Armories and immense procession of

boys in uniform at the Washington Benevolent Association.

. . . . . .

"In old Boston a feature not to be forgotten was John Wilson, the Town-crier, who rang his bell at each street corner: 'Lost! a child strayed this morning from 49 Marlboro' Street; four years old; had on a checked apron,' etc. 'Auction! Battery-march Square,' etc. He cried so loud that you could not hear what he said if you stood near."

But, boy or man, he found that social and stirring life was only good for him, diluted with nine parts of solitude, wherein he might muse upon and interpret the scene.

"I remember when a child in the pew on Sundays amusing myself with saying over common words as 'black,' 'white,' 'board,' etc., twenty or thirty times, until the words lost all meaning and fixedness, and I began to doubt which was the right name for the thing, when I saw that neither had any natural relation, but were all arbitrary. It was a child's first lesson in Idealism." Yet if the minister's voice lulled him into a pleasing mood for these speculations, in those days such dreams would be rudely broken by a sound, sudden and fearful. I have heard him say, "I can't think that nowadays those sounds are heard in church, or in any such degree, that were continual in my childhood; I think considered as part of the service

— a 'service of the Lord with horns in the Sanctuary.' The old school of Boston citizens whom I remember had great vigor, great noisy bodies; I think a certain sternutatory vigor, the like whereof I have not heard again. When Major B. or old Mr. T. H. took out their pocket handkerchiefs at church it was plain that they meant business; they would snort and roar through their noses like the lowing of an ox and make all ring again. Ah! it takes a North-Ender to do that!"

Study, all but mathematics, in which he was always dull, was no hardship to him, and while there was some play, the main recreation of these brothers seems to have been reading of history, the little fiction they could get at, and always poetry, but especially did they delight in fine rhetoric and eloquent passages. And in barns or garrets, or in Concord woods when visiting their grandmother, they forgot their surroundings, or turned them in their young imagination into Forum, battlefield or mountain-top.

1856.

Journal. "I have often observed the priority of music to thought in young writers, and last night remember what fools a few sounding sentences made of me and my mates at Cambridge, as in Lee's and John Everett's orations. How long we lived on Licöo, on Moore's 'Go where Glory waits thee' and Lalla Rookh and 'When shall the swan,

his death-note singing.' I still remember a sentence in Carter Lee's oration: 'And there was a band of heroes, and round their mountain was a wreath of light, and, in the midst, on the mountain-top, stood Liberty feeding her eagle.'"

Towards the end of the year 1814 the family began to feel severely the pinch of poverty, and it is said that they even fell short of bread. Instantly the good Dr. Ezra Ripley, who interpreted most generously his relation to the descendants of his wife, came to their aid and carried his stepson's widow and her boys to his fireside in Concord until the cold season of famine should pass by. Perhaps December of 1814 was the time, for a letter from Edward to William, who was then a Freshman in college, shows the brothers in the Concord Schools: —

"Ralph and I and Charles go to Mr. Patten's school. Charles spelt with the first class. We all say that we like Mr. Patten better every day. I wish very much that you would come here," etc.

There are a few records of this school life.

"When I was a boy and quarrelled with Elisha Jones and Frank Barrett, Dr. Ripley sent for them one evening to come to the house and there made us shake hands. Aunt Mary asked me, 'Well, what did you say to them?' 'I did not say anything.' 'Fie on you! You should have talked about your thumbs or your toes only to say something.'"

A gentleman, who in his youth was clerk in Deacon White's store, tells us that he used to love to hear the small Ralph declaim, and would capture him when he came on an errand and set him, nothing loath, on a sugar barrel whence he would entertain his earliest Concord audience, the chance frequenters of the grocery, with recitations of poetry, very likely Campbell's Glenara or the Kosciusko passage, or statelier verses from Milton.

But in spite of spelling and arithmetic in the public school, and long sermons in the church, and family worship, and catechising at the Manse conducted by the good Doctor, and the piling of wood in the yard or bringing it in by armfuls to feed the hospitable fires, the Muses were there, as everywhere. Ralph had sung the victories of the Stars and Stripes on the waters in the war, and had within the year borne an active part in it, at least to the extent of volunteering with his school-mates to handle a shovel for an hour or two on the works at Noddle's Island, and now that (as he hinted in his speech in his old age to the Latin School at their celebration) Great Britain, hearing of that action, had thought it best to make peace, when the great news was brought to Concord and the national joy found expression in ringing of the church bell and illumination of the Court House steeple, that humble blink of whale-oil or tallow seen by him half a mile away across the meadows

at the Manse "appeared very brilliant," he tells William in his letter, and he breaks forth into song: —

"Fair Peace triumphant blooms on golden wings,
And War no more of all his victory sings."

Opposite the Manse was a hill giving a wide prospect westward over the undulating landscape of forest and clearing to Monadnoc and the lower mountains on the New Hampshire boundary, and, close by, of the round hill Nashawtuc (once the seat of the Sagamore Tahattawan, last prince of the Stone-age), at the base of which the swifter Assabet joins the Musketaquid, and there united they lazily sweep northwards behind the Manse to the Great Meadows to the east. Above these meadows and behind the hill on low bluffs were old Indian cornfields, grown up to oak and birch wood, and known as Cæsar's Woods and Peter's Field, because of a family of negro squatters near by. But here the brothers Ralph, Edward and Charles found values unknown to the owners.

"They took this valley for their toy,
They played with it in every mood;
A cell for prayer, a hall for joy, —
They treated nature as they would.

"They colored the horizon round;
Stars flamed or faded as they bade,
All echoes hearkened for their sound,
They made the woodlands glad or mad."[1]

[1] Dirge in the Poems.

There they wandered and dreamed, talked of their heroes, and recited to each other or to the birch-trees the resounding verses that delighted them. Oak and aspen, brake and golden-rod, held their identity and values very loosely.

"For in those lonely grounds the sun
Shines not as on the town,
In nearer arcs his journeys run,
And nearer stoops the moon.

"There in a moment I have seen
The buried past arise;
The fields of Thessaly grew green,
Old gods forsook the skies.

"I cannot publish in my rhyme
What pranks the greenwood played;
It was the Carnival of Time
And ages went or stayed."[1]

So in these days of his youth "these poor fields" bound him unconsciously with ties which drew him back before many years to live and dream and prophesy and die in them.

Better days came to the country, and the family left the sheltering ancestral roof and returned to Boston in the summer of 1815 to live on Beacon Hill, the good Dr. Ripley sending them a Concord cow, which Ralph daily drove to pasture down that now aristocratic declivity.

The history of the family during the next ten

[1] PETER'S FIELD in the Appendix to Poems (Riverside Edition).

years may be thus stated. Each son, except Bulkeley, was fitted for college, doing his full share of the work himself, and pursuing general culture, eagerly seizing all means (books solid or imaginative, sermons, addresses, debates) that fell in their way meanwhile for recreation. One or another of them was always acting as usher, teaching and studying at once in the boys' school at Waltham of their ever friendly and helpful uncle, Rev. Samuel Ripley. They lived frugally among the frugal, applied for and kept by diligence any scholarships that were to be had, earned money by serving in Commons, by helping their more prosperous and less diligent fellow-students, by teaching during vacations, and by winning an occasional prize for a dissertation, declamation, or poem. Madam Emerson never wanted friends who gladly helped her boys, but such help was almost always received as a loan to be strictly repaid in time. Each son felt his duty to help his mother and the younger ones, but of course the burden of care and responsibility weighed heaviest on the shoulders of William, the eldest, who entered college when he was only thirteen years old, and left its stamp on him through all his days, which, though prolonged past middle life, were undoubtedly shortened and deprived of their full share of happiness and vigor by the heroic burdens assumed and sacrifices made by him in youth and early manhood for his family.

To show the Spartan counsels that braced these boys, I give extracts from the letters of his mother and Aunt Mary to William when he had just entered college, and had evidently given an account of his new room in the severe, barrack-like dormitories of those days.

"My dear Son, — You did right to give me so early a proof of your affection as to write me the first week of your College life. Everything respecting you is doubtless interesting to me, but your domestic arrangements the least of anything, as these make no part of the man or the character any further than he learns humility from his dependence on such trifles as *convenient accommodations* for his happiness. You, I trust, will rise superior to these little things, for though small indeed, they consume much time that might be appropriated to better purpose and far nobler pursuits. What most excites my solicitude is your moral improvement and your progress in virtue. . . . Let your whole life reflect honor on the name you bear. . . . Should Paul plant and Apollos water, it is God alone who can give the increase."

His Aunt Mary said: —

"Some lady observed that you felt your dependent situation too much. Be humble and modest, but never like dependence. . . . God's bounty is infinite. Be generous and great and you will confer benefits on society, not receive them, through life."

Modern Harvard even though delivered from the Greek fetich, and with freest election of studies, may be a more comfortable place for the study of the humanities. Is it a better school of character?

The mother could afford to give brave counsel, for the sons knew her tenderness, and she, in her letters to them, never complained of her own circumstances, seldom mentioned them, was constantly admonishing them to do well, but affectionately and naturally. She quotes Dr. Johnson's New Year's prayer to William in her letter of January 1, 1816, and ends her letter thus: —

"Wishing you all the happiness consistent with a life of progressive knowledge, piety, and heavenly wisdom, I remain,

"Your truly affectionate friend and mother,

"RUTH EMERSON."

Of the Waltham teaching period I find in my father's journal for 1830, this mention, probably autobiographic.

"Robin went to the house of his uncle, who was a clergyman, to assist him in the care of his private scholars. The boys were nearly or quite as old as he, and they played together on the ice and in the field. One day the uncle was gone all day and the lady with whom they boarded called on Robin to say grace at dinner. Robin was at his wit's end, he laughed, he looked grave, he said something, — nobody knew what, — and then

laughed again, as if to indemnify himself with the boys for assuming one moment the cant of a man. And yet at home perhaps Robin had often said grace at dinner."

Ralph entered college at the age of fourteen in 1817. He was President's Freshman, and so, in return for carrying official messages from the Rev. John T. Kirkland to students and officers of the college, had a room in the old President's house, still standing in Harvard Square.

When William was absent teaching, Ralph, who seems to have had thoroughly in youth the disease mothers complain of as the "silly stage," used to delight in sending to the oldest brother, naturally anxious for the sobriety or studiousness of the younger boys, letters full of scraps of verse, to which William was never addicted, and these of a doggerel type.

In a letter to William, at Waltham, retailing the college news, extolling Everett's oratory, telling of the books he reads, he says, —

"I shall chum next year with Dorr, and he appears to be perfectly disposed to study hard. But to tell the truth, I do not think it necessary to understand Mathematicks and Greek thoroughly to be a good, useful or even great man. Aunt Mary would certainly tell you so, and I think you yourself believe it, if you did not think it a dangerous doctrine to tell a Freshman. But do not be

afraid, for I do mean to study them, though not with equal interest to other studies."

During the winter vacation Waldo succeeded William in Mr. Ripley's school. The letters grow more manly, and begin to show solicitude to do his share to make life easier for their mother. In his Sophomore year he availed himself of the opportunity given to the poorer students of offsetting part of the price of their board by waiting on the Juniors' table at Commons. That year occurred the famous Rebellion, which broke out in Commons Hall. In it he took no active part, and returned with his class to Cambridge in February, 1819. Later he was admitted to the Conventicle and Pythologian Clubs, convivio-literary bands, and of one of them he tells William that his membership means that he is "one of the fifteen smartest fellows." The festivities and debates of these gatherings he has himself chronicled in the life of his classmate, John M. Cheney, written for the Social Circle. To show that the iron rule of life had occasional relaxation, I quote from his journal: —

"I drank a good deal of wine (for me) with the wish to raise my spirits to the pitch of good fellowship, but wine produced its old effect, I grew graver with every glass."

Yet while he could write an occasional Bacchic song for his mates, he quotes the above passage later as characteristic of "My doom to be solitary,"

and neither in horse-play nor social gatherings did he find his natural recreation, but in omnivorous reading outside the curriculum, and constant writing. Indeed, the expenses to meet which these boys wanted money seem to have been oil, paper and quills. They read good standard works, constantly practised writing journals, essays, poems and meditations as a daily amusement. Edward when at Andover at school, and only eleven years old, wrote fairly good letters in Latin to his oldest brother at the latter's request. Ralph and Edward read French books together when respectively only thirteen and eleven. Their mother sent them books like Flavel's "How to Keep the Heart" and "Mason on Self-Knowledge." Ralph writes to William, April, 1819: —

"If you could see me now by the benefit of Merlin's mirror or other assistance, you would pity me. The hour is soon after 5 o'clock A. M., at which time, by the way, I get up every morning and sometimes at half-past four. Well; at this hour, in Hollis, standing at your old desk twisting and turning, endeavoring to collect thoughts or intelligence enough to fill the dreary blank of a page and a third more. Add to my relative situation my chum asleep very near me.

"Saturday 24th I am going to Boston to see Aunt Mary, who has returned from her Concord and Waltham visits. Our next theme is *Avarice.*

Mr. Willard always gives us these trite and simple subjects contained in one word. Mr. Gilman gives the Juniors a motto and generally a very good one with more uncommon subjects."

If the Emersons could not get enough writing to do in the ordinary course of work they sometimes took contracts outside. An anecdote told me of Edward by his classmate shows how the brothers eked out their finances.

Mr. John C. Park says: —

"I and some others used to make a little money by writing themes for those who found it harder. The way we used to do was to write out any ideas which occurred to us bearing on the subject, and then, having cut the paper into scraps, to issue it to the various buyers to use in their themes, condensing and improving all the best of it for our own. Well, one morning, ——, your Uncle Edward's chum, came out and stood on Hollis steps and called out, 'Look here, fellows! I 've got something to show you. I want you to listen to this and tell me if it 's worth fifty cents,' and proceeded to read what Emerson had written for him. You see he had come down in his style to make it possible for the professor to believe that the theme could have emanated from ——, and in his endeavors to do so had written so humbly that —— himself doubted if it were worth half a dollar."

Where the money went that the boys managed

to earn is illustrated by the story my father told me, that he proudly sent home the five dollars which he won at the Boylston prize declamation, but on his next visit found that William, the care-worn head of the family, then eighteen years old, had paid the baker with it. Ralph had hoped his mother would buy a new shawl. He took the same year the second prize for a Dissertation on "the Present State of Ethical Philosophy."

He graduated in 1821, hardly more than in the upper half of his class, and had a part, "The Character of John Knox," in a Conference on several historical characters. He was chosen Class Poet, after seven others had refused the office; Robert Barnwell, a brilliant Southerner, being the Orator. One cannot find the germ of the Woodnotes or Monadnoc in this poem, conventional in imagery and expression and regular in metre. At different times he chummed with two classmates, and in the senior year roomed with Edward, then a Freshman. The claims of the scholar's two handmaids, Society and Solitude, he, through all his life, was weighing, but always favored the latter. In 1859 he thus decides; and, in doing so, gives this summary of his college course: —

"'In the morning, — solitude,' said Pythagoras. By all means give the youth solitude that Nature may speak to his imagination as it does never in company, and for the like reason give him a cham-

ber alone, and that was the best thing I found in College."

Now he was free to work to help the family and a place was ready for him, for William having worked hard and denied himself that every penny should come home, teaching a High School in Kennebunk, had returned and established a private school for the young ladies of Boston more than a year before, and offered his brother the place of assistant. It is hard now to imagine two young men of eighteen and twenty years (the age of Freshmen and Juniors now) opening a "finishing school" for the first young ladies of the capital; but such was the venture, and the dignity, decorum and scholarly thoroughness of William had already made the school an assured success. The school was kept in Mrs. Emerson's house.

On this undertaking, Edward irreverently comments to William: —

"I was glad to hear that you had determined to commence school in Boston and that you had such 'respectable' scholars, and I think, now people are so fond of novelty, that your external appearance will add much to your reputation, for never did such a Narcissus appear in the character of a school-master before; therefore I hope the school will be full before people have time to find out how little you know."

Soon after this the family moved to Canterbury,

a part of Roxbury, and lived in a little house in a lane (now Walnut Avenue near Blue Hill Avenue) owned by a neighboring farmer, Mr. Stedman Williams.

This thickly built part of Boston was then a picturesque wilderness of savin, barberry bush, catbrier, sumach and rugged masses of pudding stone; and here Ralph, shaking off academic harness and the awkwardness and formality of the usher in a girls' school, wrote

"Good-bye, proud World, I'm going home,"

within three miles of the State House. He was both annoyed and amused at often seeing his boyish verses, which he hardly tolerated in the later editions of his poems, asserted to have been a shaking off of the dust of his feet against an unappreciative city when he left his profession and came to Concord.

"In Roxbury in 1825 I read Cotton's translation of Montaigne. It seemed to me as if I had written the book myself in some former life, so sincerely it spoke my thought and experience. No book before or since was ever so much to me as that."

Though he told his classmate Hill and his Aunt Mary in his letters that he did not enjoy Nature so much as he had hoped to, yet it was evidently a delightful relief to the youth, — hampered by his

shyness in his rather uncongenial occupation, which he called "lifting the truncheon against the fair-haired daughters of this raw city," though the task, it is safe to say, was no worse than bitter-sweet, — to rush out to blossoms and boughs and be free to write the thoughts of which, he said, his brain must yield its burden or die.

The school was continued, but when Ralph was well established in it, William, inspired no doubt to the venture by the experience of Edward Everett and George Bancroft, went to Germany to study for the ministry at Göttingen. Here he faithfully worked for nearly two years, delighted with the scholarly opportunities and the living on almost nothing-a-year, then possible, but disgusted with the idleness and dissipation of the students. Ralph carried on the school for more than a year, but it was a sore trial for a bashful youth, unused even to sisters, to secure attention to studies (especially mathematics for which he had no gift) and observance of due discipline from the fashionable young ladies of Boston, many of them older than himself. They used to ask him on Election Day to give them a holiday while he voted, knowing him to be a minor. They liked to make him blush. When in 1865 he was asked by many of these ladies, his old scholars, to meet them, he expressed to them his regret at his short-comings thus: —

"My teaching was partial and external. I was

at the very time already writing in my chamber my first thoughts on morals and the beautiful laws of compensation and of individual genius, which to observe and illustrate have given sweetness to many years of my life. . . . I am afraid that no hint of this ever came into the school."

Miss Hannah Stevenson, one of these ladies, told me that neither the parents nor pupils considered the school a failure. She says that they found out that to praise Dugald Stewart's Philosophy, which he had lately read, and which was one of the few metaphysical works he liked, was a way to please him.

Meantime he was, as opportunity offered, preparing, like William, to assume the hereditary gown, the family circumstances had eased a little, and free of debts he joyfully closed his school, February 8, 1825, and that evening records that he goes to Cambridge next day to study divinity in the Middle Class.

In a letter to his Aunt Mary of self-examination before he enters the study for the ministry, speaking of his slight success as school-master, but honest work, he calls himself "ever the Dupe of Hope."

He took a room in Divinity Hall for its cheapness, — a ground-floor apartment with northeast exposure, — and within a month, sick and with bad eyes, was obliged to go to his Uncle Ladd's in Newton to recuperate his strength on the farm.

Working here in the field with a laborer they fell a-talking and the man, a Methodist, said that men are always praying, and that all prayers are answered. This statement struck Waldo, and upon this theme he wrote his first sermon, which he preached that summer in Waltham in the pulpit of his Uncle Ripley. Next day in the stage-coach a farmer said to him, "Young man, you 'll never preach a better sermon than that."

The autumn came and with health partly restored he went to Chelmsford to teach the Academy. His brother Bulkeley was there on a farm. Among his pupils was a boy of whom he said later: "He was a philosopher whose conversation made all the social comfort I had." This boy, Benjamin Peter Hunt, later of Philadelphia, in a letter written in 1860 says: —

"It is now thirty-five years since you began your teachings to me, and, with the exception of those of the great, rough, honest and impartial world, I think they have been the best which I ever received from any man whom I have personally known. I hope I shall continue to receive similar teachings thankfully as at present for many years to come."

Another pupil, Mr. Josiah G. Abbott, now of Boston, said that no punishment for any misbehavior could have been more deeply felt than hearing the tone in which Mr. Emerson spoke of it as "Sad! sad!"

But at Chelmsford rheumatism and bad eyes pursued him, and after three months he had to resign his charge there and go once more to Roxbury, this time to assume the successful school of his younger brother Edward, whose heroic labors in college and after had so far undermined his strength that he had been advised to take a voyage to the Mediterranean. Waldo, as he now preferred to be called, taught, though he was not well, and in spring took a school in Cambridge (his last venture of this kind) in order to be where he might get what benefit his time allowed from the Divinity School, and in October of this year, 1826, having studied in some sort for three years, he was "approbated to preach" by the Middlesex Association of Ministers. He once said that if they had examined him it would have been doubtful if they would have allowed him to preach. At this time Edward writes: "Mother has already gone to Concord. She was happy in her prospects, happy in our's, happy in Waldo's (though he was quite sick while here), and as sure as she always is of divine protection and interposition."

But now, with his profession opening before him, to weak eyes and lame hip was added a threatening stricture of the right chest, aching after each attempt to preach, and he was ordered by his doctor to go South and stay till his condition mended.

The generous uncle, Rev. Samuel Ripley, ad-

vanced money and gave letters of credit for this trip, and Dr. Ripley invited Madam Emerson to the Manse. Edward writes to William: —

"*November* 27, 1826.

"Waldo sailed in the new ship Clematis for Charleston, S. C. He will return, we think, in April and may either be a renewed and robust man or a confirmed invalid. . . . He has preached at Waltham and in the First Church [his father's, in Chauncy Place] to acceptance, and to the admiration of the intellectual part of his auditors."

And the next month he says: —

"BOSTON, *December* 26.

"Would you hear a high compliment paid to your brother's preaching? I heard Dr. Channing preach a sermon which I considered as too elevated and sublime to be an object of human praise, and in the same evening heard Dr. Gamaliel Bradford observe that there was not therein one half so much thought as in Waldo's discourse."

He got no better in Charleston, and so went on to St. Augustine, where he chafed in exile, wrote some sermons and rather despondent verses, marked with natural disfavor the idleness and dissipation of the populace, and had his first real view of Slavery. But he had an oasis in this desert; he

met and formed a friendship with Achille Murat, the son of Napoleon's Murat, Byron's fine lines upon whom I have so often heard him recite with pleasure.

"And thou too, of the snowwhite plume!
Whose realm refused thee even a tomb;
Better hadst thou still been leading
France o'er hosts of hirelings bleeding
Than sold thyself to death and shame
For a meanly royal name:

. . . . . .

There, where death's brief pang was quickest,
And the battle's wreck lay thickest
Strewed beneath the advancing banner
Of the eagle's burning crest —
(There with thunder-clouds to fan her,
Who could then her wing arrest —
Victory beaming from her breast?)
While the broken line enlarging,
Fell, or fled along the plain;
There be sure Murat was charging!
There he ne'er shall charge again!"

The son took Mr. Emerson to his inland estate, a two days' ride, and later they sailed together for Charleston, and the bad voyage of nine days was made happy by this attractive and superior companion.

The invalid worked cautiously northward, preaching in Charleston, Washington, Philadelphia and New York; but though he had gained weight and strength, the "villain stricture" still remained,

and when he came to Concord in June to see his mother he was almost ready to abandon his profession, despairing of ever being able to speak in public, and finding that two sermons a day taxed his voice alarmingly. Still he did not lose courage, preached when he could, and, taking a far-sighted view of the situation, was more prudent than his brothers could have been, engaged a better room in Divinity Hall to study as he could, and says in his letters that he sought out good laughers and gossip.

During the latter half of 1827 he supplied the Northampton pulpit for three Sundays and twice spoke in his father's church. He also preached for his kinsman Dr. Dewey in New Bedford.

In December, during a visit to Concord, New Hampshire, — "New Concord" as he must have heard it called somewhat intolerantly in his ancestral town, — he met Ellen Louisa Tucker, and went away not unaffected by her fine character and delicate beauty. She was the daughter of Beza Tucker, a Boston merchant who had died a few years earlier, and her mother had married Mr. W. A. Kent of Concord, New Hampshire.

All through the next year he lived at Divinity Hall, except when he visited the Manse, trying to regain his strength, studying, reading Hume and Coleridge, and strongly interested in the Scotch and English reviews in which the papers of a

Thomas Carlyle appeared, and in these years he had become attracted to the writings of Emmanuel Swedenborg chiefly by means of his disciple Mr. Samson Reed, a Boston apothecary, whose book on the Growth of the Mind had two years earlier given him great pleasure.

Until he could feel assurance of life and working power he avoided engagements to preach as a candidate, and refused three such opportunities. During a visit of Dr. Ripley's to Washington he supplied the Concord pulpit.

Again in December he thought he could trust himself, after a year's absence, in the dangerous neighborhood, and went to preach in Concord, New Hampshire, but before the New Year came in he was engaged to Ellen Tucker. When he began to speak of his prospects he records that she said, "I do not wish to hear of your prospects."

But within a month when the prospect was happiest, and even while he was receiving the call of the Second Church in Boston (the old church of Cotton Mather) to come as the associate pastor with the Rev. Henry Ware, Ellen Tucker showed alarming signs of the development of consumption. Dr. James Jackson gave hope however that she might be better, and my father entered on his new duty in the Hanover Street Church.

In his first sermon he gave his criticism upon ordinary preaching, freely stating his own beliefs,

and warned his people that he should insist on elbow-room in preaching. His relations with Mr. Ware were the best throughout. Soon the senior pastor's health required that he should go abroad, and the young minister assumed the whole duty. We have from many sources witness borne that his faith and his earnestness as well as his eloquence, which, as a boy, he had hoped to "put on as a robe," moved his people, especially the young. Those of more conservative and less imaginative temperament were not altogether pleased.

With regard to his success in the more perfunctory social duties of a parish minister there is more room for doubt.

Colonel Henry Lee, whose knowledge of Boston in this century is apparently unlimited, says that my father's parishioners, the North End people of those days, had a decided flavor of their own which would have appealed to his imagination.

Mrs. Minot Pratt, a parishioner in her youth, says that her father's family had dreaded any change from their beloved minister, but that Mr. Emerson came among them as sweetly and naturally as Mr. Ware in their joys and in their afflictions, and in this another lady who was present concurred. They both remembered Mrs. Emerson, and said she used to come to one service on Sundays in a carriage because of her delicate health, though in those days only the Parkmans came to

church in a carriage. Mrs. Pratt described her as very beautiful, and says that she seemed to remind people of a flower. She speaks of Mr. Emerson's delivery as very natural and free from the "ministerial tone;" remarkably quiet; and she mentioned especially his selection of hymns and reading of them. I remember his often saying that the test of a good pulpit delivery was that a minister "should be able to read *sense and poetry* into any hymn in the hymn-book."

In the summer of 1829 Mr. Emerson went with Ellen Tucker and her family on a driving journey in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Under this treatment she apparently improved and new hope revived. On the last day of September they were married at Concord, New Hampshire, and he brought her to Boston to the house of his parishioners and life-long friends Mr. and Mrs. Abel Adams in Chardon Street. Dr. Jackson advising against Mrs. Emerson's going South for the winter, they took a house in the same street, — Mr. Emerson's mother assuming the burden of the house-keeping, and his brother Charles, then studying law, was one of their family. But in spite of care and nursing and cheerful courage and hope and even gayety on her part, the young wife grew yet more delicate, and in March, 1830, her husband had to carry her southwards, leaving her with her family, himself returning to his work. She re-

turned with the next summer, but faded gradually away, and died on the 8th of February, 1831, only a year and a half after her marriage.

Mr. Ware's health being seriously impaired he had meanwhile resigned, and all the duties of the Second Church fell to Mr. Emerson. His relation to his people had become close: he and they had shared joy and grief, but as he grew he found the traditions of the church, even in its most liberal aspect in New England, oppressive, and the expectations of his people often hampered him.

He recoiled at Prayer in church practice, — a stated observance which must take place whether the minister was in the proper frame of mind or not. He felt that rites, natural and spontaneous in the early days of the church, had lost for many if not most worshippers all but their form, and therefore that it would be wiser and more honest to drop them or perform them in a way more natural to the people of the day, remembering that these were but symbols, and believing that the Oriental phraseology and forms, instead of intensifying, shut off the rays of the truth.

In June of 1832 he proposed to his church that they should dispense with the use of the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, and not insist upon the authority for its observance. It seems as if he had had little doubt that his people would be willing to give up the form and keep the spirit, and I have

been told by one of his flock that many of the younger members of his church were ready to go with him in his views and practice, though one lady came to him after the meeting and said, "You have taken my Lord away and I know not where you have laid Him," and I have read the sorrowful entries at this time in the diary of one of the most earnest of the younger worshippers. The church refused to allow him to make the changes he proposed or discontinue his part of the rite.

During the time while the question of his relations with the church was under the consideration of the committee, he went alone to the mountains, to consider his duty. He very fairly stated to himself the other side of the question, how for his aversion to a form in which he had been brought up, and which usage and association had endeared to many of the best of his flock, he was about to break the strong tie that bound him to his people and enabled him, after painful years of preparation, to be a light and help and comfort to them. But to preserve this bond, he must at the very altar, where all thought should be highest and all action truest, do violence to his spiritual instincts and smother his convictions and admit that form could outweigh spirit. Whether or not the lower considerations of a pleasant and settled sphere of usefulness presented themselves, this was enough, and he came down from the mountain having said,

"Get thee behind me, Satan," to meet his people, explained very simply to them his belief that the Scriptural observance had not the claims of authority, for their satisfaction, but frankly stating that his own objection was not of texts, but the witness against the rite in his own breast, and he resigned his charge. He and his people parted in all kindness.

He had said in his journal before this time: "I have sometimes thought that to be a good minister it was necessary to leave the ministry." Yet this could not be done without the wrench being felt; and though he had for the last years been a stronger man, now his health began to fail again, and in November he felt that he must go again in search of strength. He was tempted at first to go to the West Indies whither his brother Edward, worn out and with life in peril through his untiring, ambitious labors, had gone to recover, if he might, but some wish to see the ancient cities and a stronger desire to meet a few men who had moved him by their works, namely, Coleridge, Landor, Wordsworth, and chiefly Carlyle, led him eastward, and on Christmas Day, 1832, he sailed out of Boston Bay on a brig bound for Malta. The winter voyage of nearly six weeks in a small vessel at once refreshed him; he always throve upon physical hardship, and took a certain pleasure in it, though he did not like the sea, and always main-

tained that it was only attractive where it met the land. He went to Sicily, then Naples, Rome and Florence.

From Rome he writes to his Aunt Mary: —

"Did they tell you that I went away from home a wasted, peevish invalid? Well, I have been mending ever since, and am now in better health than I remember to have enjoyed since I was in college. How should one be sick in Rome?"

Yet he found that, as he had foreseen, he could not leave his load behind. He was content to spend some months in Europe, as one makes up one's mind to go to a hospital for just the needful weeks and no more. He saw what he must, and but for his impatience was fitted to enjoy, but felt that his work lay in another hemisphere. With his life's work in the New World hardly begun, he was in no mood for crumbling palaces, mellow paintings and bygone Greek art. Yet many years later he wrote to his friend, Mr. Bradford, at that time abroad: —

"How gladly I would help you see London, which you like not alone! How gladly go to Paris and to Rome. I seem to have been driven away from Rome by unseen angel with sword or whip, for nothing would have served me so well and dearly as Rome, and I have never been able to recall any reason I had for returning. But now to go were very different."

He was lonely and hungering for friendships with men worthy of the time. That to find such was his main desire appears in all his writings then, and his trust that they would be given him, complete.

"Alone in Rome? Why Rome is lonely too;—
Besides, you need not be alone; the soul
Shall have society of its own rank.
Be great, be true, and all the Scipios,
The Catos, the wise patriots of Rome
Shall flock to you, and tarry by your side,
And comfort you with their high company.
. . . . . .
You must be like them if you desire them.
. . . . . .
And ever in the strife of your own thoughts
Obey the noble impulse: that is Rome;
. . . . . .
Wait then, sad friend, wait in majestic peace
The hour of Heaven. Generously trust
Thy fortune's web to the beneficent hand
That until now has put his world in fee
To thee. He watches for thee still. His love
Broods over thee, and as God lives in heaven
However long thou walkest solitary —
The hour of Heaven shall come, the man appear."

He went to Florence and saw Walter Savage Landor, and took much pleasure in the company and guidance of Horatio Greenough the sculptor. But in England were the main magnets. He passed through France, making but short stay in

Paris, and crossed the Channel in July, to seek out Wordsworth and Carlyle: —

"Am I who have hung over their works in my chamber at home not to see those men in the flesh and thank them and interchange some thoughts with them when I am passing their very doors?"

He had letters, but he did not often present them. He told me that his custom was when he felt a wish to know any person, to write him a letter when he was in the neighborhood, that the receiver might judge by it whether he shared the wish for acquaintance and could then bid the stranger come if there seemed grounds where their sympathies could meet. I remember that a pushing and vain young lecturer, who came to Concord, asked an acquaintance with whom he stayed for an introduction to Mr. Emerson, who had attended his lecture the night before. While his friend, having presented him, went out to fasten his horse, the young man asked my father to "endorse him," as he expressed it, "as a lecturer," saying that various noted literary men had done so. "My young friend," said Mr. Emerson, "do you not know that there is but one person who can recommend you?" "Why, who is that, sir?" "*Yourself.*"

With difficulty Emerson found Carlyle buried among the lonely hills and moors of Nithsdale, but the meeting was a white day in the lives of both, and then began a friendship that remained strong

to the end. In "English Traits" and elsewhere my father has told of the visits to the few people whose writings at that time appealed to him, and his good friend in England, Mr. Alexander Ireland, and Mr. Conway have told in their books the story of the incidents of this visit. I will note here that he preached in Edinburgh in the Unitarian Chapel.

He had found the friend he came on faith to see; he loved him and hoped all things from his strength and truth, in spite of the extravagant expression and doleful views which he tried to believe he would outgrow, but still there was a disappointment, and on the voyage home he notes that he had met men of far less power than those he had met abroad who had greater insight into religious truth. In his journal he wrote: —

"I am very glad my travelling is done. A man not old feels himself too old to be a vagabond. The people at their work, the people whose vocations I interrupt by my letters of introduction accuse me by their looks for leaving my business to hinder theirs." He felt it was for the New World men to answer the Old World men what the New Religion was to be for which mankind was waiting and the hour ripe. His strength had returned, and this with the strong necessity which he felt to do what he might to answer this question raised his spirits.

He reached Boston October 9th and wrote: "It

is the true heroism and the true wisdom, *Hope*. The wise are always cheerful. The reason is (and it is a blessed reason) that the eye sees that the ultimate issues of all things are good." He took lodgings, wrote down religiously the thought that each day brought, and preached as opportunity offered.

He had officiated in New Bedford before in Dr. Dewey's pulpit, and now was invited there again to preach for several Sundays. This visit was memorable to him, for he came intimately in contact with the more advanced and spiritually-minded Quakers and was strongly influenced by the conversation with Miss Mary Rotch, one of their saints. He heard the extreme doctrine of Obedience as accepted by the Friends, submission of the soul, renunciation of the will, and then trusting implicitly the divine motion in the breast.

NEW BEDFORD, *February* 12, 1834.

Journal. "The sublime religion of Miss Rotch yesterday. She was very much disciplined, she said, in the years of Quaker dissensions, and driven inward, driven home, to find an anchor, until she learned to have no choice, to acquiesce without understanding the reason when she found an obstruction to any particular course of acting. She objected to having this spiritual direction called an impression, or an intimation, or an

oracle. It was none of them. It was so simple it could hardly be spoken of."

This doctrine he had arrived at by another path, but spirit and not form was what he had been striving for in public worship, and the simple worship of the more liberal Quakers pleased him much.

Not long after this, his cousin, the Rev. David Green Haskins, tells that when asked by him about his sympathy with Swedenborgian ideas, and to define his religious position, Mr. Emerson said very slowly, "I believe I am more of a Quaker than anything else. I believe in the 'still small voice,' and that voice is Christ within us."

The New Bedford Unitarians asked him to be their settled pastor, Dr. Dewey having left them, and to this he inclined, but told them that prayer was too sacred an act to be done perfunctorily at stated times, whether the Spirit came or no, and that if he came it must be understood that that part of the service must be, or not, as he was impelled at the moment. To these terms the parish objected and he declined the offer. He lectured in Boston that winter and preached also at Plymouth, and there met Miss Lydia Jackson, his future wife.

The Lyceum, an institution then rather of culture than of amusement, was being formed in most of the towns and cities of New England, and

spreading rapidly westward and southward. The freedom of its platform giving an opportunity for the widest range and frankest expression of opinion became more and more attractive to the preacher who, on leaving the pulpit, had told his people that he should always continue to teach the truth as he conceived it, and he soon found that people would hear approvingly, and even welcome, doctrine arriving in secular garb which they felt committed against if it came clothed in ecclesiastical phrase from the pulpit. He wrote about this time: —

"I please myself with contemplating the felicity of my present situation — may it last! It seems to me singularly free, and invites me to every virtue and to great improvement."

He now felt that he had begun to learn; through Nature he was to study the soul and God; that this must be done in the solitude of the country, and he longed to reëstablish a home and bring to it his mother and his brothers Edward and Charles, who were almost a part of himself. William, all too early called, as we have seen, to be the prop and stay of the family, kept school for several years, studied for the ministry at Göttingen in Germany, but was turned by honest doubts from the profession of his fathers. There is an excellent letter written by him to Dr. Ripley in September, 1830, on the observance of the Lord's Supper,

in which he sets forth very clearly but respectfully the argument that it was not intended to be obligatory. This strongly suggests the source of the reasons set forth by his brother later for the satisfaction of the Second Church, although with Waldo his instinct, rather than arguments of authority, dictated his course. William chose the profession of Law, which he exercised with fidelity and honor in New York for many years. In his busy life he always cherished his scholarly tastes, and he and his brother Waldo in days of prosperity and adversity stood by one another most loyally.

My father had a day-dream of settling in Berkshire; felt that the country life would reëstablish the health of his younger brothers, to whom he was now in position to offer a home, and that they perhaps might together edit and write a review, and he pleased himself with the thought of the varied talent that the four brothers could combine upon the problems of the day, for William in New York found time from his law work to write lectures and reviews. But Edward bravely stayed at his work in the island, Charles had begun the study of law in Concord in the office of Samuel Hoar, Esq., and was forming yet stronger ties to Concord, and for Waldo, really dependent on the stimulus of occasional access to cultivated persons, to the Athenæum and College libraries and such works of art as were then to be seen in New England, and, re-

quiring also a public for his lectures, Berkshire was too remote.

But here at hand was an ancestral town, sufficiently remote, yet near enough to the city for his needs, its river meadows having for him happy associations of his boyhood. The presence of his brother Charles turned the scale, and in the autumn of 1834 he came with his mother, and they were received as boarders at the Manse. They came in sadness, for, only a few days earlier, letters had come from Porto Rico telling of the death of Edward Bliss Emerson.

Of Edward, his next older brother had a romantic admiration, for he saw in him qualities that he missed in himself. Edward was handsome, graceful, had a military carriage and had been an officer in the college company; he had confidence and executive ability, great ambition and an unsleeping, goading conscience that never would let him spare himself. He was eloquent, but his speech had a lofty and almost scornful tone. My father said: "Edward and I as boys were thrown much together in our studies, for he stood always at the top of his (a younger) class, and I low in mine." He had, while studying in the office of Daniel Webster with the commendation of his chief, of whose sons he was the tutor, lost his reason for a time through years of overwork and privation, and though he recovered it, his main spring seemed

broken, and he went to the West Indies and filled a place as clerk in a commercial house, hoping to regain his power.

> "I see him with superior smile,
> Hunted by Sorrow's grisly train,
> In lands remote, in toil and pain
> With angel patience labor on
> With the high port he wore erewhile,
> When foremost of the youthful band,
> The prizes in all lists he won,
> Nor bate one jot of heart or hope."

Mr. Emerson would have considered it a fortunate conjunction of the stars that brought his fiery and affectionate sibyl, Aunt Mary, in her nomadic perigrinations from one part of New England to another (for she was too concentrated a bitter-cordial to be ever taken for a long time at any one boarding place), at this time to Concord.

"CONCORD, *November* 24, 1834.

"Aunt Mary boards in the village and keeps up a surprisingly good understanding with the people of this world, considering her transcendental way of living. Yesterday she came here with shabbiest horse and chaise, which she says she saw standing at the door where she was shopping, and, having found out whom it belonged to, she asked the man to let her go and ride whilst he was making purchases, for she wanted to go up to Dr. Ripley's. The man,

I suppose, demurred, so she told him she was his own townswoman, born within a mile of him, and finally, she says, when she left him, *in the gig*, he told her 'not to hurry.' But so she lives from day to day."

Once she even impressed the horse of a man who came to call the physician at whose house she boarded, and rode sidewise on a man's saddle to the Manse, arrayed in her dimity shroud, which, tired of waiting for death, she used as a day-gown, and over it, on this occasion, threw a scarlet shawl which somebody had laid down in the entry.

But these constitutional oddities of this strange enthusiast must not so far draw attention that her achievements in culture and piety be forgotten, and the wonder of them in face of the forlorn circumstances of her rearing. It is not easy to read unmoved these sentences of her diary: —

"My oddities were never designed — effect of an uncalculating constitution at first, then through isolation. . . . It is so universal with all classes to avoid me that I blame nobody. . . . As a traveller enters some fine palace and finds all the doors closed and he only allowed the use of some avenues and passages, so have I wandered from the cradle over the apartments of the social affections or the cabinets of natural or moral philosophy, the recesses of ancient and modern lore. All say, —

Forbear to enter the pales of the initiated by birth, wealth, talents and patronage. I submit with delight, for it is the echo of a decree from above; and from the highway hedges where I get lodging and from the rays which burst forth when the crowd are entering these noble saloons, whilst I stand at the doors, I get a pleasing vision which is an earnest of the interminable skies where the mansions are prepared for the poor. . . . Should He make me a blot on the fair face of his Creation, I should rejoice in his will. . . . Yes, love thee and all thou dost though thou sheddest frost and darkness on every path of mine."

Settled in the little room in the south gable of the Manse my father wrote in his journal: —

"CONCORD, *November* 15, 1834.

"Hail to the quiet fields of my fathers. Not wholly unattended by supernatural friendship and favor let me come hither. Bless my purposes as they are simple and virtuous. Coleridge's fine letter[1] comes in aid of the very thoughts I was revolving. And be it so. Henceforth I design not to utter any speech, poem or book that is not entirely and peculiarly my work. I will say at public lectures and the like, those things which I have meditated for their own sake and not for the first time with a view to that occasion."

[1] In London *Literary Gazette*, Sept. 13, 1834.

That winter he lectured in Boston and preached in various places, among others in Plymouth, and there became engaged to Miss Lydia Jackson, an event which made it the more necessary for him to find a home, and though she had hope that he might come to Plymouth, he writes in February that he shall hardly get away from Concord and must win her to love it.

He thought at first of buying the house on the spur of Punkatasset towards Dr. Ripley's (since owned by the late Captain Richard Barrett), but, a good opportunity occurring, he purchased a new and very well built house and small barn with two acres of land, the rather unattractive situation of which was in a measure offset by being on the stage-road to Boston, and also, while near the village, being only divided by a few fields from pine-woods and hills, soon to have spiritual values to him, and from the lonely fields of which he sings in the Dirge.

Nor was the human interest lacking. As a boy and youth in his visits with his mother and brothers to his grandmother, daughter of Rev. Daniel Bliss and widow of Rev. William Emerson, then the wife of Dr. Ripley, he had necessarily met at the Manse the leading citizens of the town when they called upon his step-grandfather, the venerable clergyman, and there and in his rides with the latter gentleman, when in his chaise he visited his

parishioners in their seasons of joy and sorrow, he learned the histories of the families who lived in the scattered farms of the river town, many of whom in the sixth generation still tilled the holding originally granted their ancestor. The population was more stable in those days; there was absolutely no foreign element, except the descendants of the negro slaves of an earlier period.

Dr. Ripley held among the people of the town a position by right of his office, his long residence and his virtues that it is hard for a person who has no memory of those days to understand. In the spirit of his Puritan predecessors he felt himself like Moses in the wilderness, a shepherd and judge of the people, and that he had unquestionable right to know about their temporal and spiritual affairs, and in the true Hebrew Spirit of the early New Englanders he pointed out to his young kinsman the recompense in this world of the deeds of the men, even to children's children.

Thus when Mr. Emerson moved his household gods to the town which was thereafter to be his home, it was in a sense his home already, with personal and ancestral ties for him and he knew its daily and its traditional life, and his being chosen to review its Past and speak the word of good omen for the Future on the day when the Town celebrated the completing of the second century since its planting, was not like the calling in a

stranger among the people. This choice was a pleasant welcome to him from them, and it was a happy circumstance for him (the nature of his pursuits obliging him to live a little apart) that his task in its preparation and its fulfilment strengthened and drew closer the bonds of interest and affection that bound him to his new home. He made diligent search among the ancient and almost undecipherable town records, he visited the old villagers, survivors of Concord Fight, read the historico-religious chronicles of the early New England writers, and found the notes of the events of Concord's part in the beginning of the Revolution in the diary of his grandfather, her young and patriotic minister in those days.

On Saturday, September 12th, the celebration occurred. Mr. Emerson gave his oration, his kinsman, the Rev. Dr. Ripley being one of the chaplains of the day, and his brother Charles Chauncy Emerson one of the marshals.

He passed Sunday with his relatives at the Manse, and on Monday, the 14th, drove in a chaise to Plymouth, where he was married in the evening to Lydia Jackson, at her home, the old Winslow Mansion on North Street, and the next morning set forth in the chaise again and brought his bride before sunset to their new home in Concord, a substantial house where the newer turnpike left the "Great Road" to Boston.

Mr. Emerson never repented this choice of a home which proved exactly fitted for his purpose; gave privacy and company enough, and the habit of the town favored the simple living which he valued.

To the happy early association with the hill by the Manse and the Great Fields and Meadows, were now to be added new formed ones with the low hills on his southeastern horizon clothed with a continuous wood which hid Walden among its oaks and dark pines.

He went to work, as I shall presently tell, in the garden below his house, but the sight of the great garden across the brook but half a mile off was strong to lure him away. "Look at the sunset when you are distant half a mile from the village, and I fear you will forget your engagement to the tea-party. That tint has a dispersive power not only of memory, but of duty. But the city lives by remembering." The garden at home was often a hindrance and care, but he soon bought an estate which brought him unmingled pleasure, first the grove of white pines on the shore of Walden, and later the large tract on the farther shore running up to a rocky pinnacle from which he could look down on the Pond itself, and on the other side to the Lincoln woods and farms, Nobscot blue in the South away beyond Fairhaven and the river gleaming in the afternoon sun. It is of this that he wrote: —

"If I could put my woods in song
And tell what 's there enjoyed,
All men would to my garden throng
And leave the cities void.

"My garden is a forest ledge
Which older forests bound;
The banks slope down to the blue lake-edge,
Then plunge to depths profound.

"Self-sown my stately garden grows;
The wind, and wind-blown seed,
Cold April rain and colder snows
My hedges plant and feed."[1]

Brought up mainly near the city, with mind filled in youth with such images of nature as poets of an artificial age and a long cultivated island had reflected in their more or less distorted mirrors, he had come to study Nature at the fountain-head, and found, as he had suspected or he would not have come, that all was new.

1838.

Journal. "The American artist who would carve a wood-god and who was familiar with the forest in Maine, where enormous fallen pine-trees 'cumber the forest floor,' where huge mosses depending from the trees, and the mass of the timber give a savage and haggard strength to the grove, would produce a very different statue from the sculptor who only

[1] MY GARDEN (in Poems, Riverside Edition, p. 197) and WALDEN (see Appendix of same volume, p. 207) were originally one poem.

knew a European woodland, — the tasteful Greek, for example."

"It seems as if we owed to literature certain impressions concerning nature which nature did not justify. By Latin and English Poetry, I was born and bred in an oratorio of praises of nature, flowers, birds and mountains, sun and moon, and now I find I know nothing of any of these fine things, that I have conversed with the merest surface and show of them all; and of their essence or of their history know nothing. Now furthermore I melancholy discover that nobody, — that not these chanting poets themselves, — know anything sincere of these handsome natures they so commended; that they contented themselves with the passing chirp of a bird or saw his spread wing in the sun as he fluttered by, they saw one morning or two in their lives, and listlessly looked at sunsets and repeated idly these few glimpses in their song.

"But if I go into the forest, I find all new and undescribed; nothing has been told me. The screaming of wild geese was never heard; the thin note of the titmouse and his bold ignoring of the bystander; the fall of the flies that patter on the leaves like rain; the angry hiss of some bird that crepitated at me yesterday; the formation of turpentine, and indeed any vegetation and animation, any and all are alike undescribed. Every man that goes into the woods seems to be the first man

that ever went into a wood. His sensations and his world are new. You really think that nothing can be said about morning and evening, and the fact is, morning and evening have not yet begun to be described.

"When I see them I am *not* reminded of these Homeric or Miltonic or Shakspearian or Chaucerian pictures, but I feel a pain of an alien world, or I am cheered with the moist, warm, glittering, budding and melodious hour that takes down the narrow walls of my soul and extends its pulsation and life to the very horizon. That is Morning; to cease for a bright hour to be a prisoner of this sickly body and to become as large as the World."

June, 1841.

Journal. "The rock seemed good to me. I think we can never afford to part with Matter. How dear and beautiful it is to us. As water to our thirst so is this rock to our eyes and hands and feet. . . . What refreshment, what health, what magic affinity, ever an old friend, ever like a dear friend or brother when we chat affectedly with strangers comes in this honest face, whilst we prattle with men, and takes a grave liberty with us and shames us out of our nonsense.

"The flowers lately, especially when I see for the first time this season an old acquaintance, — a gerardia, a lespedeza, — have much to say on Life and

Death. 'You have much discussion,' they seem to say, on 'Immortality. Here it is: here are we who have spoken nothing on the matter.' And as I have looked from this lofty rock lately, our human life seemed very short beside this ever-renewing race of trees. 'Your life,' they say, 'is but a few spinnings of this top. Forever the forest germinates; forever our solemn strength renews its knots and nodes and leaf-buds and radicles.' Grass and trees have no individuals as man counts individuality. The continuance of their race is Immortality; the continuance of ours is not. So they triumph over us, and when we seek to answer or to say something, the good tree holds out a bunch of green leaves in your face, or the woodbine five graceful fingers, and looks so stupid-beautiful, so innocent of all argument, that our mouths are stopped and Nature has the last word."

"I cannot tell why I should feel myself such a stranger in nature. I am a tangent to their sphere, and do not lie level with this beauty. And yet the dictate of the hour is to forget all I have mislearned; to cease from man, and to cast myself into the vast mould of nature."

In a letter to his wife just before their marriage telling why he preferred to live in Concord rather than in Plymouth, as she had hoped, he says: "Wherever I go, therefore, I guard and study my

rambling propensities with a care that is ridiculous to people, but to me is the care of my high calling."

Strangers wish to see his study; the woods were his best study during the years of his greatest spiritual activity, and the study, so-called, at home, rather his library and writing room. In months when the weather allowed he went often to the oracle in the pine wood and waited with joyful trust for the thought.

> "In dreamy woods what forms abound
> That elsewhere never poet found:
> Here voices ring, and pictures burn,
> And grace on grace where'er I turn."

There he felt that he saw things healthily, largely, in their just order and perspective.

He sometimes took his note-book with him, but more often recorded the thought on his return, striving to give it exactly as it came to him, for he felt that men were

> "Pipes through which the breath of God doth blow
> A momentary music."

Even in the winter storms he was no stranger to the woods, and the early journals show that he liked to walk alone at night for the inspiration he ever found in the stars.

January, 1841.

Journal. "All my thoughts are foresters. I have scarce a day-dream on which the breath of the

pines has not blown, and their shadows waved. Shall I not therefore call my little book Forest Essays"

All through his life he kept a journal. On the first leaf of that for 1837 he wrote: —

"This book is my savings' bank. I grow richer because I have somewhere to deposit my earnings, and fractions are worth more to me because corresponding fractions are waiting here that shall be made integers by their addition."

The thoughts thus received and garnered in his journals were later indexed, and a great part of them reappeared in his published works. They were religiously set down just as they came, in no order except chronological, but later they were grouped, enlarged or pruned, illustrated, worked into a lecture or discourse, and after having in this capacity undergone repeated testing and rearranging, were finally carefully sifted and more rigidly pruned and were printed as essays. Some one said to him, "You take out all the most interesting parts" (anecdotes and illustrations used in the lecture room), "and call it 'putting on their Greek jackets.'"

But he did not go to Nature as the Man of Science does, nor as the artist often does, to note mere physical facts and laws, or surface beauty. He saw in visible nature only a garment giving to wise eyes the hint of what lay underneath: —

Ever the words of the gods resound ;
But the porches of man's ear
Seldom in this low life's round
Are unsealed, that they may hear.,
Wandering voices in the air
And murmurs in the wold
Speak what I cannot declare,
Yet cannot all withhold."

When he returned to his room and took up the books of the authors, there was sometimes a shock felt. He tried them by Nature's great standards, and they perhaps were found wanting, but in the cases of the greatest masters, Nature but illustrated their idealism and stamped it as true. Not only among the poets and prophets, but (perhaps with Goethe as a bridge) in the works of the advancing men of Science, — John Hunter, Lamarck, Lyell, Owen, Darwin, — he was quick to recognize a great thought, and his own spiritual studies in Concord woods made him meet almost more than half way the new discoveries of progressive improvement with unbounded possibilities in the living creature.

But he never lost sight of the fact that, if the pine-tree, from the moment of its sprouting, acted on the sand and rock and air and water, subdued and converted them into beauty and strength *of the pine-tree*, and not of the oak or vine or animal, so he must bear his relation to family, village, country, world, and react with these surroundings for beauty and virtue.

"Natural History by itself has no value; it is like a single sex, but marry it to human history, and it is poetry. Whole floras, all Linnæus's or Buffon's volumes contain not one line of poetry; but the meanest natural fact, the habit of a plant, the organs, or work, or noise of an insect, applied to a fact in human nature, is beauty, is poetry, is truth at once." And so we come back to him as citizen and head of a family.

Had Mr. Emerson inherited no bond to Concord, he would on principle have taken a householder's and citizen's interest in the town which sheltered him. The house in Concord had a small garden on the south side, near the brook, in which Mrs. Emerson at once established her favorite flowers, plants and seeds, brought from the Old Colony, especially her favorites, tulips and roses, but a part of it was reserved for vegetables and already provided with a few apple, pear and plum-trees, and here Mr. Emerson began his husbandry, leaving his study to do a little work there every day.

Journal. "The young minister did very well, but one day he married a wife, and after that he noticed that though he planted corn never so often, it was sure to come up tulips, contrary to all the laws of botany."

In the spring following his marriage he was sought out in the garden by one of his townsmen who came to notify him of his first civic honor,

namely, that at the March-meeting he had been elected one of the hog-reeves for the ensuing year. It was the ancient custom of the town to consider the newly-married man eligible for this office. Probably the neighbor's grounds had suffered from some stray shote that morning, and he came to notify the proper officer that he must do his duty.

But Mr. Emerson soon began to assume duties and relations towards the people and institutions of the town, in which his fitness was more manifest. Mrs. Emerson and his brother Charles, who made his home with them, both had large classes in the Sunday-school, then a comparatively new establishment, and felt a great interest in them. One of the scholars of Charles tells me that the hour of his teaching and talk with them was the one bright spot in the desperate New England Sabbath of those days. Mrs. Emerson used to have meetings of the teachers in her parlor and her husband used to come in from his study and talk with the young people.

He attended church, if at home, during the first part of his life in Concord, certainly during the time that Dr. Ripley officiated there, and occasionally supplied the pulpit, though he seems for some reason to have preferred not to preach in Concord, although for some time after settling there he regularly preached in East Lexington, and often accepted invitations to preach in other pulpits until after 1840.

My mother gives this anecdote of his East Lexington preaching, which should be preserved as showing his entire courage and sincerity. He was reading one of the old sermons; suddenly he stopped and said quietly, "The passage which I have just read *I do not believe*, but it was wrongly placed."

1840.

Journal. "What is more alive among works of art than our plain old wooden church, built a century and a quarter ago, with the ancient New England spire. I pass it at night and stand and listen to the beats of the clock like heart-beats; not sounding, as Elizabeth Hoar well observed, so much like tickings, as like a step. It is the step of Time. You catch the sound first by looking at the clock face. And then you see this wooden tower rising thus alone, but stable and aged, toward the midnight stars. It has affiance and privilege with them. Not less than the marble cathedral it had its origin in sublime aspirations, in the august religion of man. Not less than those stars to which it points, it began to be in the soul."

"At church to-day I felt how unequal is this match of words against things. Cease, O thou unauthorized talker, to prate of consolation, and resignation, and spiritual joys, in neat and balanced sentences. For I know these men who sit below,

and on the hearing of these *words* look up. Hush quickly! for care and calamity are *things* to them. There is Mr. A., the shoemaker, whose daughter has gone mad. And he is looking up through his spectacles to hear what you can offer for his case. Here is my friend, whose scholars are all leaving him, and he knows not what to turn his hand to next. Here is my wife who has come to church in hope of being soothed and strengthened after being wounded by the sharp tongue of a slut in her house. Here is the stage-driver who has the jaundice and cannot get well. Here is B. who failed last week, and he is looking up. O speak things, then, or hold thy tongue."

"I delight in our pretty church music and to hear that poor slip of a girl, without education, without thought, yet show this fine instinct in her singing, so that every note of her song sounds to me like an adventure and a victory in the '*tonwelt*,' and whilst all the choir beside stay fast by their leader and the bass-viol, this angel voice goes choosing, choosing, choosing on, and with the precision of genius keeps its faithful road and floods the house with melody."

"A fine melody again at the church. I always thank the gracious Urania when our chorister selects tunes with solos for my singer. My ear

waits for those sweet modulations, so pure of all manner of personality, so universal that they open the ear like the rising of the wind."

"1838.

"At church I saw that beautiful child —— and my fine, natural, manly neighbor who bore the bread and wine to the communicants with so clear an eye and excellent face and manners. That was all I saw that looked like God at church. Let the clergy beware when the well-disposed scholar begins to say, 'I cannot go to church, time is too precious."

In his full manhood he had written when his successor was ordained at the Second Church: —

"We love the venerable house
Our fathers built to God."

This sentiment he never lost, but he cared so much for the church that it chafed him to hear low utilitarian, Honesty-is-the-best-Policy views, or cold formalism. He always delighted in a born priest, of whatever denomination he chanced to wear the gown.

June, 1845.

Journal. "It was a pleasure yesterday to hear Father Taylor preach all day in our country church. Men are always interested in a man, and the whole various extremes of our little village society were for once brought together. Black and white, poet and grocer, contractor and lumberman,

Methodists and preachers, joined with the regular congregation in rare union. Oliver Houghton, Kimball, John Garrison, Belknap, Britton, the Methodist preachers, W. E. Channing, Thoreau, Horace Mann, Samuel Hoar, The Curtises, Mrs. Barlow, Minot Pratt, Edmund Hosmer, were of Taylor's auditory."

But when he found that the average preacher of that day had no help for him, and that sermon and prayer jarred rather than accorded with the thought which he had received when earnestly listening in solitude for the truest word to speak for the help of the people, he ceased to go. If those who find clouds go simply for example's sake because others may find light, how are they not responsible if those others, like them, find clouds and go away baffled?

> "The dervish whined to Said,
> 'Thou didst not tarry while I prayed:
> Beware the fire which Eblis burned.'
> But Saadi coldly thus returned, —
> 'Once with manlike love and fear
> I gave thee for an hour my ear,
> I kept the sun and stars at bay,
> And love, for words thy tongue could say.
> I cannot sell my heaven again
> For all that rattles in thy brain.'"

In the town-meetings he took great pleasure. In them he saw the safety and strength of New

England. "In this institution," he says, "the great secret of political science was uncovered, and the problem solved how to give every individual his fair weight in the government without any disorder from numbers. The roots of society were reached. Here the rich gave counsel, but the poor also; and moreover the just and the unjust." It pleases him to note how the citizens assume that some allowance and license will be given them in this, as it were, family-gathering, and that "a man felt at liberty to exhibit at town-meeting feelings and actions that he would have been ashamed of anywhere but amongst his neighbors," because all this shows "that if the results of our history are approved as wise and good, it was yet a free strife; if the good counsel prevailed, the sneaking counsel did not fail to be suggested; freedom and virtue, if they triumphed, triumphed in a fair field. And so be it an everlasting testimony for them, and so much ground of assurance of man's capacity for self-government."

He sat among his neighbors and watched the plain men of the town manage their affairs with the courage of their convictions, and, a speaker by profession himself, seldom took part in the debate, and then with great hesitancy and modesty, but came home to praise the eloquence and strong good-sense of his neighbors.

November, 1863.

Journal. "At the town-meeting one is impressed with the accumulated virility of the four or five men who speak so well to the point, and so easily handle the affairs of the town. Only four last night, and all so good that they would have satisfied me, had I been in Boston or Washington. The speech of —— was perfect, and to that handful of people, who heartily applauded it."

And at another time he writes: —

"The most hard-fisted, disagreeably restless, thought-paralyzing companion sometimes turns out in the town-meeting to be a fluent, various and effective orator. Now I find what all that excess of power which chafed and fretted me so much in —— was for."

The lecture platform was, as he often said, his free pulpit. "Lyceums — so that people will let you say what you think — are as good a pulpit as any other." He took a hearty interest in, and had great hopes for the influence of that active focus of the intellectual and spiritual life of the village for nearly fifty years. This institution was then new in New England. Concord was one of the earliest towns that had formed such an association, only five years before Mr. Emerson came there to live. It was at first a sort of Mutual Improvement Society, and debates between appointed disputants

were the usual entertainment; but these soon gave way to lectures on subjects historical, literary, scientific or philanthropic, though it was soon found that these last were so exciting to the New England mind, and so closely related to the politics of the day that they nearly wrecked the Lyceums. Nevertheless Mr. Emerson held that these issues, even though the firebrands frightened for a time the Muses away, could not honestly be ignored in the Lyceum, for while the blot remained, the people must look at it. He writes in his journal: —

"*November* 9, 1837.

"Right-minded men have recently been called to decide for abolition."

He received that year a letter from a gentleman, in behalf of the Salem Lyceum, requesting him to lecture there the next winter, and adding: "The subject is of course discretionary with yourself, provided no allusions are made to religious controversy, or other exciting topics upon which the public mind is honestly divided." He writes in his journal: "I replied on the same day to Mr. ——, by quoting these words and adding, — 'I am really sorry that any person in Salem should think me capable of accepting an invitation so encumbered.'"

Mr. Emerson was at several times Curator of the Lyceum; almost invariably attended its meetings when in town, but his principal business in

winter being the addressing similar bodies all over the country, he was necessarily absent much of the time. He helped the management in every way possible by inducing his literary friends to give lectures in Concord, and entertained many of the lecturers at his house, though he might not be at home.

In my boyhood I remember hearing of a remark made to my father, in conversation about speakers for the Lyceum, by a leading citizen of Concord: "There are only three persons, as far as I know, whose opinions are obnoxious to the members of our community: they are, Theodore Parker, Wendell Phillips, and — if I may be so candid — yourself, Sir." However, they bore with a lecture from him (sometimes two or even more) nearly every winter from 1835 to 1880.

From the beginning of the anti-slavery struggle Mr. Emerson stood for Freedom (indeed he had admitted anti-slavery speakers into his pulpit in Boston), although while honoring the courage and principle of the leaders of the agitation he disliked the narrowness and bitterness often shown by them, and refused to come into the harness of their organization. He claimed that his broader work included theirs. He saw that his proper work and lot in the world would remain neglected and unfulfilled, should he assume their weapons, take their orders and be tied up in their organization; but

when, from his allotted post apart, he saw the opportunity, or a great occasion called him, he felt all the more bound to show his colors and strike his blow for Freedom, and when an issue was pending, he usually consented to requests of Garrison or Phillips that he would speak, or at least sit on the platform, at large meetings in the cities, especially if the meeting promised to be stormy. He early made an anti-slavery address in Concord (November 1837). Again, in 1844, on the occasion of the anniversary of the emancipation of the slaves in the British West Indies. In 1845 he was one of the committee at a meeting held in Concord to resent the outrage done by citizens of South Carolina to the agent of Massachusetts, sent thither to protect the rights of her citizens, our townsman the Honorable Samuel Hoar.

As the agitation went on, the calls were more frequent, and often against all his instincts and desires he left his study and his pine grove to attend meetings where was little to console him. He alludes to them occasionally good naturedly and with some humor.

But sadder days were at hand. In September, 1846, when a poor negro had been seized in Boston and carried back to slavery, and a citizens' meeting was called in Faneuil Hall, he wrote to the Committee: —

"If it shall turn out, as desponding men say, that our people do not really care whether Boston is a slave port or not, provided our trade thrives, then we may at least cease to dread hard times and ruin. It is high time our bad wealth came to an end. I am sure I shall very cheerfully take my share of suffering in the ruin of such a prosperity, and shall very willingly turn to the mountains to chop wood and seek to find for myself and my children labors compatible with freedom and honor."

The passage of the Fugitive Slave Act by Congress for a time darkened the face of the day, even to this apostle of Hope. He woke in the mornings with a weight upon him. In his public speeches at this time he spoke of it as "a law which every one of you will break on the earliest occasion; a law which no man can obey or abet without loss of self-respect and forfeiture of the name of a gentleman." When his children told him that the subject given out for their next school composition was, The Building of a House, he said, "You must be sure to say that no house nowadays is perfect without having a nook where a fugitive slave can be safely hidden away."

The national disgrace took Mr. Emerson's mind from poetry and philosophy, and almost made him for the time a student of law and an advocate. He eagerly sought and welcomed all principles in law-

books, or broad rulings of great jurists, that Right lay behind Statute to guide its application and that immoral laws are void. His journals at this epoch, one especially called "Liberty," are full of the results of his researches, and fragments of speeches in which he proposed to use them.

1852.

Journal. "I waked last night and bemoaned myself because I had not thrown myself into this deplorable question of Slavery, which seems to want nothing so much as a few assured voices. But then in hours of sanity I recover myself, and say, God must govern his own world, and knows his way out of this pit without my desertion of my post, which has none to guard it but me. I have quite other slaves to free than those negroes, to wit, imprisoned spirits, imprisoned thoughts, far back in the brain of man, — far retired in the heaven of invention, and which, important to the republic of man, have no watchman or lover or defender but I."

When Daniel Webster, who had been an idol of his youth, turned his back on anti-slavery principles, Mr. Emerson in his speeches strongly exposed and attacked the great apostate, though still so beloved at the North that who ventured to attack him must brave angry hisses, and in a speech at Cambridge, though interrupted by the outcries and groans of young Boston Southern sympathizers, he said: —

"Nobody doubts that Daniel Webster could make a good speech. Nobody doubts that there were good and plausible things to be said on the part of the South. But this is not a question of ingenuity, not a question of syllogisms, but of sides. *How came he there?*"[1]

When he threw down his dismal newspaper, crossed the brook and pastures, and reached his sacred grove of white pines, courage and hope revived. The oracles he ever found favorable, but he saw that he must abide the slow and secure working of the great laws. Meantime was the general government corrupt, — let Massachusetts keep her hands clean of iniquity. Did Massachusetts stoop to be the tool of threatening Carolina, and was Boston timid and subservient, — let those "who lived by the ragged pine" preserve their manly virtue against better days. When he hoed his garden, a crop of comfort straightway sprang up.

1852.

Journal. "I have confidence in the laws of morals as of botany. I have planted maize in my field every June for seventeen years and I never knew it come up strychnine. My parsley, beet, turnip, carrot, buck-thorn, chestnut, acorn, are as sure. I believe that justice produces justice, and injustice injustice.

[1] Lecture on Fugitive Slave Law.

. . . . . .

"And what number of these Southern majors and colonels, and of Yankee lawyers and manufacturers and state-secretaries thanking God in the Boston tone, will suffice to persuade the dreadful secrecy of moral nature to forego its appetency, or cause to decline its chase of effect?"

He found comfort also in the talk with his sturdy neighbors.

"1851.

"Hosmer says: 'Sims came on a good errand; for Sumner is elected, Rantoul and Palfrey are likely to be. The State of Massachusetts ought to buy that fellow.'"

Thus the interpreter delighted him by showing him his own doctrine of Good out of Evil; that, in a sense, injustice *would* produce justice.

On his way to town meeting he saw his next neighbor, George Minot, at work, after his leisurely fashion, and asked him if he was not going to cast his vote with all honest men for Freedom. "No," said this honest Rip van Winkle, "I ain't goin'. It 's no use a-balloting, for it won't stay. What you do with a gun will stay so."

The man of the pen was pleased, but did not think it a case for a gun yet, so went on to the town meeting.

1854.

Journal. "Those who stay away from election think that one vote will do no good. 'T is but one step more to think that one vote will do no harm. But if they should come to be interested in themselves, in their career, they would no more stay away from the election than from honesty or from affection."

"Let us have the considerate vote of single men spoken on their honor and their conscience. What a vicious practice is this of our politicians at Washington pairing off! As if one man who votes wrong going away could excuse you who mean to vote right for going away; or as if your presence did not tell in more ways than in your vote. Suppose the three hundred heroes at Thermopylæ had paired off with three hundred Persians: would it have been all the same to Greece, and to history?"

He found that to do one's duty to the State strengthened the individual.

"A man must ride alternately on the horses of his private and public nature. . . .

"Like vaulters in a circus round
That leap from horse to horse, but never touch the ground."

Though without skill in the weapons of debate, and most modest about his knowledge of practical affairs, he went to political meetings as a civic duty and a discipline of courage. In his boyhood, I am

told by one of his early friends, he said he thought he could endure martyrdom, be burned at the stake. His younger brother, Charles, said, "Yes, but if any one spoke to you on the way there you would be so abashed you would n't have a word to say." Later some criticism to the same purpose was probably made by him, for my father writes in his journal in 1833: —

"Were it not a heroic venture in me to insist on being a popular speaker and run full tilt against the Fortune who, with such beautiful consistency, shows evermore her back. Charles's *naif* censure last night provoked me to show him a fact apparently entirely new to him, that my entire success, such as it is, is composed wholly of particular failures, every public work of mine of the least importance having been, probably without exception, noted at the time as a failure. The only success (agreeably to common ideas) has been in the country, and there founded on the false notion that here was a Boston preacher. I will take Mrs. Barbauld's line for my motto [of a brook],

"And the more falls I get, move faster on."

Partly for the rough training good for a scholar he went to political meetings, — always as a learner, to be sure, for so he went everywhere to his dying day, — but only as to details, for even his modesty did not accept the doctrine that the scholar, the

"callow college doctrinaire," in the language of to-day, must learn his duty from the callous politician or man of affairs. Let large issues of justice and humanity arise, no deference was to be shown to the man of the world; principles the scholar and poet knows better than he.

"The vulgar politician, if he finds the honesty of a party or speaker stand in his way, disposes of them cheaply as the 'sentimental class.'"

"The office of the scholar is to cheer, to raise and to guide men by showing them facts amidst appearances. These being his functions, it becomes him to feel all confidence in himself and to defer never to the popular cry. He, and he only, knows the world. The world of any moment is the merest appearance. . . . Some ephemeral trade, or war, or man, is cried up by half mankind, and cried down by the other half, as if all depended on this particular up or down. . . . Let him not quit his belief that a pop-gun is a pop-gun, though the ancient and honorable of the earth should affirm it to be the crack of doom."

"A scholar defending the cause of slavery, of arbitrary government, of monopoly, of the oppressor, is a traitor to his profession. He has ceased to be a scholar. He is not company for clean people. The fears and agitations of those who watch the markets, the crops, the plenty or scarcity of money, or other superficial events, are

not for him. He knows the world is always equal to itself, that the forces which uphold and pervade it are eternal." . . .

"The scholar is bound to stand for all the virtues and all the liberties, — liberty of trade, liberty of the press, liberty of religion, — and he should open all the prizes of success and all the roads of nature to free competition."

"I have no knowledge of trade. There is not a sciolist who cannot shut my mouth and my understanding by strings of facts that seem to prove the wisdom of tariffs. But my faith in freedom of trade, as the rule, returns always. If the Creator has made oranges, coffee and pineapples in Cuba and refused them to Massachusetts, I cannot see why we should put a fine on the Cubans for bringing these to us, — a fine so heavy as to enable Massachusetts men to build costly palm-houses and glass conservatories under which to coax these poor plants to ripen under our hard skies, and thus discourage the poor planter from sending them to gladden the very cottages here. We punish the planter there and punish the consumer here for adding these benefits to life. Tax opium, tax poisons, tax brandy, gin, wine, hasheesh, tobacco and whatever articles of pure luxury, but not healthy and delicious food."

Whether native or acquired by training, Mr.

Emerson always had courage at the right time. He would have scorned to leave out, for fear of disturbing the feelings of his audience, any drastic lesson that he believed they needed to hear. When, in the winter of 1838, he had moved his cultivated Boston hearers with his lecture on Heroism, and carried them with him in full tide of sympathy with unselfish courage to the death, in causes forlorn until the hero assumed them, he suddenly said, looking in their eyes: —

"The day never shines in which this element may not work. . . . It is but the other day that the brave Lovejoy gave his breast to the bullets of the mob for the rights of free speech and opinion, and died when it was better not to live."

A cold shudder ran through the audience at the calm braving of public opinion, says an eye-witness. Heroes in the concrete are not in force in any lecture-room.

So on his second visit to Europe in 1847–8, at a time when in England and in France the social fabric showed signs of crumbling under the pressure of excited masses of humanity, feeling that somehow they were living defrauded of their birthrights of a fair and free chance in life by worn-out or corrupted institutions, and that the rich and fortunate spent no thought on their condition, — Mr. Emerson, being invited to read lectures, wrote one upon Natural Aristocracy. He read this in Edin-

boro' first, but later in London, and among his hearers were many noble and titled persons. He spoke of the duties, obligations, of the prosperous and favored classes, and how gladly mankind see an efficient, helpful man in high station: "But the day is darkened when the golden river runs down into mud, when genius grows idle and wanton and reckless of its fine duties of being Saint, Prophet, Inspirer to its humble fellows, baulks their respect and confounds their understanding with silly extravagances." He told how much even of folly and vice the populace will forgive to such as will do substantial public or private service after their kind, and then said: —

"But if those who merely sit in their places and are not, like them, able; if the dressed and perfumed gentleman, who serves the people in no wise and adorns them not, is not even *not afraid of them;* if such a one go about to set ill examples and corrupt them, who shall blame them if they burn his barns, insult his children, assail his person and express their unequivocal indignation and contempt? He eats their bread, he does not scorn to live by their labor, — and after breakfast he cannot remember that there are human beings."

He records that, soon after, Lord —— called on him at his lodgings and "hoped I would leave out that passage if I repeated the lecture." His only comment in his journal is, "Aristocracy is always

timid." Had he been speaking to the revolutionists, it is very certain that he would have used no expressions to excite them to violence; but this lesson was written for the aristocracy of England, and he respected them too much to offer them pap for medicine.

To all meetings held in Concord for the cause of Freedom, spiritual or corporal, he felt bound to give the sanction of his presence whether the speakers were good or bad; he officially welcomed Kossuth and his Hungarian exiles; he entertained John Brown at his house and gave largely from his, at that time very limited, means, to the fund for the furtherance and arming of the Kansas "Free State" immigration.

. . *January* 1, 1861.

Journal. "The furious slave-holder does not see that the one thing he is doing by night and by day is to destroy slavery. They who help and they who hinder are all equally diligent in hastening its downfall. Blessed be the inevitabilities.

. . . . . .

"Do the duty of the hour. Just now the supreme public duty of all thinking men is to assert freedom. Go where it is threatened and say 'I am for it and do not wish to live in the world a moment longer than it exists.'"

At this time, just before the war, the darkest

hour before the dawn of healthy and patriotic feeling, he went, invited by Wendell Phillips, to the anti-slavery meeting in Boston, which, it was known, the mob had determined to break up. He stood up calmly before the howling and jeering throng of well-dressed Bostonians who would save the Union with slavery, and silence the troublesome fanatics who would not have the Northern conscience put under Southern rule, — and spoke, but his words were drowned in the uproar. He looked them in the face and withdrew. When at last the dragon's teeth sprang up, he could not feel the war as a cruel Nemesis, but as a just and helpful one, recalling the lost manliness to a people and replacing materialism and scepticism by a high faith. His instincts were against violence, but he always believed that it should be held as a last reserve.

1850.

Journal. "Yes, the terror and repudiation of war and of capital punishment may be a form of materialism . . . and show that all that engages you is what happens to men's bodies."

In the journals of the war time are everywhere headings, "Benefits of the War," and the like, and he cheerfully writes: —

"Certain it is that never before since I read newspapers has the *morale* played so large a part in them as now."

On returning from some occasion where a clergyman had unsatisfactorily preached and prayed about the war, he says: —

"Yet I felt while he spoke that it was easy, or at least possible, to open to the audience the thesis which he mouthed upon, how the Divine order 'pays' the country for the sacrifices it has made, and makes in the war. War ennobles the country; searches it; fires it; acquaints it with its resources; turns it away from false alliances, vain hopes and theatric attitude; puts it on its mettle, — 'in ourselves our safety must be sought;' — gives it scope and object; concentrates history into a year; invents means; systematizes everything. We began the war in vast confusion: when we end it all will be system."

He stood for greater freedom in the act of worship, for a freer thought and expression than American literature, — prose or poetry, — had yet known, for the emancipation of the poor black, yet without undue severity to the planter, who found himself at birth, like his slave, entangled in this institution, for removal of oppressive disabilities from women, for greater freedom and scope in university education, for purer methods in politics and trade, at a time when to espouse these causes was to incur disapproval or ridicule or enmity from most persons even in New England: even well-wishers smiled and said his teachings were visionary and his ideas

unpractical. Were they so, or had he a better eye than these persons for the perspective of events, and the great roundness of the world, while they only noticed the trivial slopes on which they for the moment travelled? "Drawing," he said, "is a good eye for distances, and what else is wisdom but a good eye for distances, and time is only more or less acceleration of mental processes." And so in mere worldly wisdom he proved wiser than many churchmen and politicians and practical men of his day, who saw but five years before them, while he saw more; for in the fifty years that he lived after parting with his church he saw the causes for which he had stood with a few other scholars and independent thinkers and believers in the Higher Law, become the accepted creeds of those who had disapproved or smiled compassionately, and thus his early word of encouragement to the scholar in 1837 became exactly fulfilled for himself: "If a single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts and there abide, the world will come round to him."

In 1842 I find that Mr. Emerson was associated with Mr. Reuben N. Rice (who then kept the Green Store on the common) and Mr. A. G. Fay as a director of the Concord Athenæum, a sort of Reading Room where for a small fee citizens could have access to a number of newspapers and magazines which, but for such an institution, would

never have come within the reach of most of them. He joined the Fire Association, and the leathern buckets and baize bag always hung over the stairs in the side entry, but the introduction of the hand-engines and organization of the Fire Department rendered them obsolete, and within my recollection they were hardly taken down. He went in the neighborly fashion of those days to fires in the woods, and fought fire with his pine bough (appropriate weapon for this lover of the pine) side by side with his neighbors.

He had nothing of the military instinct, and had availed himself of the benefit of clergy, so to speak, to avoid it, for in his diary, speaking of the daily need of yeoman's service from every one, he says: "Condition, your private condition of riches or talents or seclusion, — what difference does that make? As a man that once came to summon my brother William and me to *train* replied to the excuse that we were the instructors of youth, — 'Well, and I am a watchmaker!'"

But strangely, from the very fact of consciousness of lack in this direction, he admired it in others. Any practical or executive talent in however humble a sphere, even of cowherd or stable-keeper, commanded his respect, but he took interest in great soldiers, read all the memoirs of Napoleon, and quotes him as often perhaps as any historical character. His explanation is symbolic.

"What is the meaning of this invincible respect for war here in the triumphs of our commercial civilization, that we can never quite smother the trumpet and the drum? How is it that the sword runs away with all the fame from the spade and the wheel? Why, but *because courage never loses* its high price? Why, but *because we wish to see* those to whom existence is most adorned and attractive foremost to peril it for their object, and ready to answer for their actions with their life?"[1]

Journal. "The military eye which I meet so often, darkly sparkling now under clerical, now under rustic brows — for example, Robert Bartlett, William Channing, and our William Shepard here; the city of Lacedæmon and the poem of Dante, which seems to me a city of Lacedæmon turned into verses."

"*October* 19, 1839.

"Another day: and hark, New Day, they batter the grey cheek of thy morning with booming of cannon, and now with lively clatter of bells and whooping of all the village boys. An unwonted holiday in our quiet meadows and sandy valleys and Cornwallis must surrender to-day.[2] Without

[1] Essay on Aristocracy in *Lectures and Biographical Sketches.*

[2] At musters in New England at this epoch an important feature was a sham-fight ending in a representation of the surrender by Lord Cornwallis to Washington. These heroes were represented in scarlet and blue-and-buff uniforms respectively, with powdered

sympathy with the merry crowd, the pale student must yet listen and perchance even go abroad to beg a look at the fun."

But in the evening the tale ran differently: "And so I went to the Sham-Fight and saw the whole show with pleasure. The officer instantly appears through all this masquerade and buffoonery. I thought when I first went to the field that it was the high tide of nonsense, and indeed the rag-tag and bob-tail of the County were there in all the wigs, old hats and aged finery of the last generations. Then the faces were like the dresses, — such exaggerated noses, chins and mouths, that one could not reconcile them with any other dress than that frippery they wore. Yet presently Nature broke out in her old beauty and strength through all this scurf. The man of skill makes his jacket invisible. Two or three natural soldiers among these merry captains played out their habitual

wigs and cocked hats, below which were seen the brown or rubicund features of rustic colonels.

In the *Biglow Papers* the disenchanted private in the Mexican War writes home to his friend, —

> "Recollec' what fun we had
> You an' I an' Ezry Hollis
> Down to Waltham plains last Fall
> A havin' the Cornwallis?
> This sort o' thing ain't *jest* like that," etc.,

and even the moral Hozey Biglow admits that "there *is* fun at a Cornwallis."

energy so well that order and reason appeared as much at home in a farce as in a legislature. Meantime the buffoons of a sham-fight are soon felt to be as impertinent there as elsewhere. This organization suffices to bring pioneers, soldiers, outlaws and homicides distinct to view, and I saw Washington, Napoleon and Murat come strongly out of the mottled crew."

Musters of those days presented still another aspect which most of us remember. Bacchus divided the honors with Mars.

"Fools and clowns and sots make the fringe of every one's tapestry of life, and give a certain reality to the picture. What could we do in Concord without Bigelow's and Wesson's bar-rooms and their dependencies? What without such fixtures as Uncle Sol and old Moore who sleeps in Dr. Hurd's barn, and the red Charity-house over the brook? Tragedy and comedy always go hand in hand."

Even in noisy politics he liked to find a deeper cause.

1840.

Journal. "The simplest things are always better than curiosities. The most imposing part of this Harrison Celebration of the Fourth of July in Concord, as in Baltimore, was this ball, twelve or thirteen feet in diameter, which, as it mounts the little heights and descends the little slopes of the

road, draws all eyes with a certain sublime movement, especially as the imagination is incessantly addressed with its political significancy. So the Log Cabin is a lucky watchword."

"1840.

"Sept. 11. See how fond of symbols the people are. See the great ball which they roll, from Baltimore to Bunker Hill. See Lynn in a Shoe, and Salem in a Ship. They say and think that they hate poetry and all sorts of moonshine; and they are all the while mystics and transcendentalists."

1859.

Journal. "There is no strong performance without a little fanaticism in the performer. That field yonder did not get such digging, ditching, filling and planting for any pay. A fanaticism lucky for the owner did it. James B. opened my hay as fiercely on Sunday as on Monday. Neither can any account be given of the fervid work in M. M. E.'s manuscripts but the vehement religion which would not let her sleep nor sit, but write, write, night and day, year after year. . . . Unweariable fanaticism which, if it could give account of itself, is the troll which by night

"'Threshed the corn that ten day-laborers could not end.'

Cushing and Banks and Wilson are its victims, and by means of it vanquishers of men. But they

whose eyes are prematurely opened with broad common-sense views are hopeless *dilettanti* and must obey these madmen."

"1841.

"E. H. repeats Colonel Shattuck's toast to poor —— : 'The Orator of the Day; his *subject* deserves the attention of every agriculturist.' It does honor to Colonel Shattuck. I wish the great lords and diplomatists at Cambridge had only as much ingenuity and respect for truth. The speeches froze me to my place. At last Bancroft thawed the ice and released us, and I inwardly thanked him."

"1834.

Journal. "Pray Heaven that you may have a sympathy with all sorts of excellence, even with those antipodal to your own. If any eye rests on this page, let him know that he who blotted it could not go into conversation with any person of good understanding without being presently gravelled. The slightest question of his most familiar proposition disconcerted him, — eyes, face and understanding, beyond recovery. Yet did he not the less respect and rejoice in this daily gift of vivacious common sense which was so formidable to him."

In the early days of Mr. Emerson's Concord housekeeping it took from two to three hours to reach Boston by the stage which lumbered by his

house through dust or mud, and these long rides gave greater opportunity for forming acquaintance with one's neighbors than the comparatively short and unsociable ride in the seat of a railroad car. Lawyers going to court, ministers exchanging with their country brethren, traders going to supply their miscellaneous country-stores, ladies going visiting or to see the sights of the city were there. Somebody always knew somebody, and thus cheerful conversation was sure to be set agoing.[1]

1841.

Journal. "I frequently find the best part of my ride in the Concord coach from my house to Winthrop Place to be in Prince Street, Charter Street, Ann Street and the like places at the North End of Boston. The *deshabille* of both men and women, their unrestrained attitudes and manners make pictures greatly more interesting than the clean-shaved and silk-robed procession in Washington and Tremont Streets. I often see that the attitudes of both men and women engaged in hard work are more picturesque than any which art and study could contrive, for the Heart is in these first. I say picturesque, because when I pass these groups I

[1] "The Concord Coach leaves Earl's Tavern, 36 Hanover Street [Boston], every morning at 6: every afternoon at 3: and on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 10, A. M." Extract from Mr. Emerson's letter to a friend in 1842.

instantly know whence all the fine pictures I have seen had their origin: I feel the painter in me; these are the traits which make us feel the force and eloquence of form and the sting of color. But the painter is only *in* me and does not come to the fingers' ends."

He liked to talk with horsemen and stage-drivers, and enjoyed their racy vernacular and picturesque brag as much as the cautious understatement of the farmer.

On his walks he fell in with pot-hunters and fishermen, wood-choppers and drivers of cattle, and liked to exchange a few words with them, and he always observed the old-time courtesy of the road, the salutation to the passer-by, even if a stranger.

1837.

Journal. "Do not charge me with egotism and presumption. I see with awe the attributes of the farmers and villagers whom you despise. A man saluted me to-day in a manner which at once stamped him for a theist, a self-respecting gentleman, a lover of truth and virtue. How venerable are the manners often of the poor!"

"How expressive is form! I see by night the shadow of a poor woman against a window curtain that instantly tells a story of so much meekness, affection and labor as almost to draw tears."

"1841.

"I went to the Rainers' concert last night in our Court House. When I heard them in Boston, I had some dreams about music; last night,—nothing. Last night I enjoyed the audience. I looked with a great degree of pride and affection at the company of my townsmen and townswomen, and dreamed of that kingdom and society of Love which we preach."

"1846.

"In the city of Makebelieve is a great ostentation bolstered up on a great many small ostentations. I think we escape something by living in the village. In Concord here there is some milk of life, we are not so raving-distracted with wind and dyspepsia. The mania takes a milder form. People go a-fishing and know the taste of their meat. They cut their own whippletree in the woodlot; they know something practically of the sun and the east wind, of the underpinning and the roofing of the house, and the pan and mixture of the soils."

To the shops, excepting that in which the post-office was kept, he seldom went, unless to pay a bill; though he looked sometimes with a longing eye at the group of village worthies exchanging dry remarks round the grocery stove, but he knew it was of no use for him to tarry, for the fact that

he was scholar and clergyman would silence the oracles.

1847.

Journal. "I thought again of the avarice with which my man looks at the Insurance Office and would so fain be admitted to hear the gossip that goes forward there. For an hour to be invisible there and hear the best-informed men retail their information he would pay great prices, but every company dissolves at his approach. He so eager and they so coy. A covey of birds do not rise more promptly from the ground when he comes near than merchants, brokers, lawyers disperse before him. He went into the tavern, he looked into the window of the grocery shop with the same covetous ears. They were so communicative, they laughed aloud, they whispered, they proclaimed aloud their sentiment; he opened the door — and the conversation received about that time a check, and one after another went home. Boys and girls who had so much to say provoked scarcely less curiosity, and were equally inaccessible to the unmagnetic man." . . .

"We want society on our own terms. Each man has facts that I want, and, though I talk with him, I cannot get at them for want of the clue. He does not know what to do with his facts: I know. If I could draw them from him, it must be with his keys, arrangements and reserves. Here is all

Boston, — all railroads, all manufactures and trade, in the head of this well-informed merchant at my side. What would I not give for a peep at his rows and rows of facts. Here is Agassiz with his theory of anatomy and nature; I am in his chamber, and I do not know what question to put. Here is Charles T. Jackson, whom I have known so long, who knows so much, and I have never been able to get anything truly valuable from him. Here is all Fourier in Brisbane's head; all languages in Kraitser's; all Swedenborg in Reed's; all the Revolution in old Adams's head; all modern Europe and America in John Quincy Adams's, and I cannot appropriate a fragment of all their experience. I would fain see their picture-books as they exist. Now if I could cast a spell on this man at my side and see his pictures without his intervention or organs, and, having learned that lesson, turn the spell on another, lift up the cover of another hive, and see the cells and suck the honey, and then another and so without limit — they were not the poorer and I were rich indeed.

"The ring of Gyges prefigures this — society on our own terms. . . .

"But Osman[1] answered and said, I do not know whether I have the curiosity you describe. I do not want the particulars which the merchant values,

[1] Osman represents in his writings not himself, but his better self; an ideal man put in the same circumstances.

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or the lawyer, or the artist, but only the inevitable results which he communicates to me in his manner and conduct and in the tone and purpose of his discourse."

"1837.

"Perhaps in the village we have manners to paint which the city life does not know. Here we have Mr. S. who is man enough to turn away the butcher who cheats in weight, and introduce another butcher into town. The other neighbors could not take such a step. Here is Mr. E. who, when the Moderator of the Town meeting, is candidate for representative, and so stands in the centre of the box inspecting each vote; and each voter dares carry up a vote for the opposite candidate and put it in. There is the hero who will not subscribe to the flagstaff or the engine, though all say it is mean. There is the man who gives his dollar but refuses to give his name, though all the other contributors are set down. There is Mr. H. who never loses his spirits, though always in the minority, and though 'people behave as bad as if they were drunk,' he is just as determined in opposition and just as cheerful as ever. Here is Mr. C. who says 'Honor bright,' and keeps it so. Here is Mr. S. who warmly assents to whatever proposition you please to make; and Mr. M. who roundly tells you he will have nothing to do with the thing. The high people in the village are timid, the low

people are bold and *nonchalant;* negligent too of each other's opposition, for they see the amount of it, and know its uttermost limits, which the more remote proprietor does not. Here too are not to be forgotten our two Companies, the Light Infantry and the Artillery, who brought up, one the Brigade Band, and one the Brass Band from Boston, set the musicians side by side under the great tree on the Common and let them play two tunes and jangle and drown each other and presently got the Companies into actual hustling and kicking. . . . To show the force that is in you (whether you are a philosopher and call it heroism or are a farmer and call it pluck), you need not go beyond the tinman's shop on the first corner; nay, the first man you meet who bows to you may look you in the eye and call it out."

"1843.

"It is a compensation for their habitual moderation of nature in the Concord fields and the want of picturesque outlines, the ease of getting about. I long sometimes to have mountains, ravines and flumes, like that in Lincoln, New Hampshire, within reach of my eyes and feet; but the thickets of the forest and the fatigue of mountains are spared me, and I go through Concord as through a park.

"Concord is a little town, and yet has its honors. We get our handful of every ton that comes to the

city. We have had our share of Everett and Webster, who have both spoken here; so has Edward Taylor, so did George Bancroft, and Bronson Alcott and Charles Lane, Garrison and Phillips the abolition orators. We have had our shows and processions, conjurers and bear-gardens, and here too came Herr Driesbach with his cats and snakes.

"Hither come in summer the Penobscot Indians, and make baskets for us on the river-bank. Dr. Channing and Harriet Martineau were here, and what I think much more, my friends, — here were Aunt Mary, Ellen, Edward and Charles, here is Elizabeth Hoar: here have been or are Margaret Fuller, S. G. W. and A. W., C. S., C. K. N., George P. Bradford, Ellery Channing, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mrs. Ripley, Henry Thoreau and Elliot Cabot. In the old time, John Winthrop, John Eliot, Peter Bulkeley, then Whitfield, then Hancock, Adams and the college were here in 1775. Kossuth spoke to us in the Court House in 1852. Agassiz, Greenough, Clough, Wyman, Hawthorne, Samuel Hoar, Thoreau, Newcomb, Lafayette."

The presence of his brother Charles in Concord had much to do with my father's decision to come here. He was engaged to be married to Miss Elizabeth Hoar, lived with Mr. and Mrs. Emerson,

and was the life of the house, and they had added new rooms in joyful expectation that he would soon bring his bride to live with them; and Madam Emerson would have had the joy of having two sons, with their wives, under the same roof with her. But as Charles reached the age of thirty, the critical period which two of his brothers had hardly passed, and which had proved fatal to Edward, his delicate constitution gave way to exposure when in an overworked condition, and he died of quick consumption in May, 1836, but a few months before he was to have been married. Of him his grieving brother wrote: —

"And here I am at home again. My brother, my friend, my ornament, my joy and pride has fallen by the wayside, — or rather has risen out of this dust. . . . Beautiful without any parallel in my experience of young men was his life; happiest his death. Miserable is my own prospect from whom my friend is taken. . . . I read now his pages, I remember all his words and motives without any pang, so healthy and humane a life it was, and not like Edward's, a tragedy of poverty and sickness tearing genius. . . . I have felt in him the inestimable advantage, when God allows it, of finding a brother and a friend in one."

In a letter to his brother William he says: —

"CONCORD, *May* 15, 1836.

. . . "At the church this morning, before the prayers, notes of the families were read [desiring the prayers of the congregation] and one from Dr. Ripley, and one, 'many young people, friends of the deceased, join in the same request.' As it was unusual it was pleasing. Mr. Goodwin preached in the morning from the text, 'Who knoweth the time of his death?' and made affectionate and sympathetic remembrance of Charles. Grandfather, [Dr. Ripley] in the afternoon, called him by name in his own rugged style of Indian eloquence. 'This event seems to me,' he said, 'loud and piercing, like thunder and lightning. While many aged and burdensome are spared, this beloved youth is cut down in the morning.' "

The coming to Concord of Mrs. Ripley, always a dear and honored friend, and the frequent presence of her brother, Mr. George P. Bradford, a man whom Mr. Emerson always held in very affectionate regard; later the coming of Mr. Alcott, first brought by Mr. Bradford as a visitor in 1835, then of Mr. William Ellery Channing and of Mr. Hawthorne, and his discovery of Henry Thoreau, then a youth just out of college, the easy access of friends, known and unknown, through the building of the Fitchburg Railroad, — all these circumstances heightened the value of his home in his

eyes. I trust that I shall not overstep the bounds of propriety in the following brief mention of some of my father's nearer friends.

For Mr. Alcott's thought and lofty aims he had the very highest respect, and he always declared that conversation with Mr. Alcott (alone in the study) had been very inspiring to him. Early in their acquaintance he writes of him to his friend, Rev. William H. Furness: —

"CONCORD, *October*, 1837.

. . . "I shall always love you for loving Alcott. He is a great man: the God with the herdsmen of Admetus. I cannot think you know him now, when I remember how long he has been here, for he grows every month. His conversation is sublime. Yet when I see how he is underestimated by cultivated people, I fancy none but I have heard him talk."

In his journal for 1856 he says: "The comfort of Alcott's mind is the connection in which he sees whatever he sees. He is never dazzled by a spot of color or a gleam of light to value that thing by itself, but for ever and ever is prepossessed by the undivided one behind it and all. I do not know where to find in men or books a mind so valuable to faith. His own invariable faith inspires faith in others. . . . For every opinion or sentence

of Alcott a reason may be sought and found, not in his will or fancy, but in the necessity of Nature itself, which has daguerred that fatal impression on his susceptible soul. He is as good as a lens or a mirror, a beautiful susceptibility, every impression on which is not to be reasoned against or derided, but to be accounted for, and, until accounted for, registered as an addition to our catalogue of natural facts. There are defects in the lens and errors of refraction and position, etc., to be allowed for, and it needs one acquainted with the lens by frequent use to make these allowances; but 't is the best instrument I have ever met with."

He deplored the uncertainty of his inspiration in public conversation, and felt that the man he knew and prized was not to be found in any of his writings. His value for Mr. Alcott's high plane of thought and life never, however, blinded him to his limitations.

1857.

Journal. "Once more for Alcott it may be said that he is sincerely and necessarily engaged to his task, and not wilfully or ostentatiously or pecuniarily."

Mr. Hawthorne always interested my father by his fine personality, but the gloomy and uncanny twilight atmosphere of his books was one in which Mr. Emerson could not breathe, and he never could

read far. But he believed that the man was better than his books, and Hawthorne's death cut off hopes which he had cherished of a future friendship. In a letter to Mrs. Hawthorne soon after her husband's death, he says: —

"*July* 11, 1864.

. . . "I have had my own pain in the loss of your husband. He was always a mine of hope to me, and I promised myself a rich future in achieving at some day, when we should both be less engaged to tyrannical studies and habitudes, an unreserved intercourse with him. I thought I could well wait his time and mine for what was so well worth waiting. And as he always appeared to me superior to his own performances, I counted this yet untold force an insurance of a long life. Though sternly disappointed in the manner and working, I do not hold the guaranty less real." [1]

[1] Mr. Hawthorne once broke through his hermit usage, and honored Miss Ellen Emerson, the friend of his daughter Una, with a formal call on a Sunday evening. It was the only time, I think, that he ever came to the house except when persuaded to come in for a few moments on the rare occasions when he walked with my father. On this occasion he did not ask for either Mr. or Mrs. Emerson, but announced that his call was upon Miss Ellen. Unfortunately she had gone to bed, but he remained for a time talking with my sister Edith and me, the schoolmates of his children. To cover his shyness he took up a stereoscope on the centre table and began to look at the pictures. After looking at them for a time he asked where these views were taken. We told him they were pictures of the Concord Court and Town-houses, the Common

The history of Mr. Emerson's first acquaintance with Mr. Thoreau is this. When the former was delivering a new lecture in Concord, Miss Helen Thoreau said to Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Emerson's sister, "There is a thought almost identical with that in Henry's journal," which she soon after brought to Mrs. Brown. The latter carried it to Mr. Emerson, who was interested, and asked her to bring this youth to see him. She did, and thus began a relation that lasted all their lives of strong respect and even affection, but of a Roman character.[1]

In 1838 he writes: "I delight much in my young friend who seems to have as free and erect a mind as any I have ever met."

Mr. Thoreau stood the severest test of friendship, having been once an inmate of Mr. Emerson's house for two years. He was as little troublesome a member of the household, with his habits of plain living and high thinking, as could well have been, and in the constant absences of the master of the house in his lecturing trips, the presence there of such a friendly and sturdy inmate was a great comfort. He was "handy" with tools,

and the Mill-dam, on hearing which he expressed some surprise and interest, but evidently was as unfamiliar with the centre of the village where he had lived for years as a deer or a wood-thrush would be. He walked through it often on his way to the cars, but was too shy or too rapt to know what was there.

[1] Mr. Thoreau was fifteen years younger than Mr. Emerson.

and there was no limit to his usefulness and ingenuity about house and garden. To animals he was as humane as a woman. He was by no means unsocial, but a kindly and affectionate person, especially to children, whom he could endlessly amuse and charm in most novel and healthful ways. With grown persons he had tact and high courtesy, though with reserve. But folly or pretence or cant or subserviency excited his formidable attack, and, like Lancelot, he would

> "Strike down the lusty and long practised knight
> And let the younger and unskilled go by
> To win his honor and to make his name."

But also with those whom he honored and valued like his friend Emerson, a certain combative instinct and love of paradox on his part often interfered with the fullest enjoyment of conversation, so that his friend says of him, "Thoreau is, with difficulty, sweet." In spite of these barriers of temperament, my father always held him, as a man, in the highest honor. He delighted in being led to the very inner shrines of the wood-gods by this man, clear-eyed and true and stern enough to be trusted with their secrets, who filled the portrait of the Forest-seer of the Woodnotes, although those lines were written before their author came to know Thoreau.

In 1852, writing to a friend whom he would induce to come to Concord, Mr. Emerson says: —

"If Corinna or the Delphic Sibyl were here, would you not come breathless with speed? Yet I told you that Elizabeth Hoar was here, and yet you come not. If old Pan were here, you would come, and we have young Pan under another name, whom you shall see, and hear his reeds if you tarry not." And earlier, the journal celebrates Thoreau, this invaluable new-found guide: —

"*June* 6, 1841.

"I am sometimes discontented with my house, because it lies on a dusty road and with its sills and cellar almost in the water of the meadow. But when I creep out of it into the night or the morning and see what majestic and what tender beauties daily wrap me in their bosom, how near to me is every transcendent secret of Nature's love and religion, I see how indifferent it is where I eat and sleep. This very street of hucksters and taverns the moon will transform into a Palmyra, for she is the apologist of all apologists and will kiss the elm-trees alone, and hides every meanness in a silver-edged darkness. Then the good river-god has taken the form of my valiant Henry Thoreau here, and introduced me to the riches of his shadowy starlit, moonlit stream, a lovely new world lying as close and yet as unknown to this vulgar trite one of streets and shops, as death to life, or poetry to prose. Through one field we went to the boat, and

then left all time, all science, all history behind us and entered into nature with one stroke of a paddle. Take care, good friend! I said, as I looked West into the sunset overhead and underneath, and he, with his face towards me, rowed towards it, — Take care: you know not what you do, dipping your wooden oar into this enchanted liquid, painted with all reds and purples and yellows, which glows under and behind you. Presently this glory faded and the stars came and said, Here we are. . . . These beguiling stars, soothsaying, flattering, persuading, who, though their promise was never yet made good in human experience, are not to be contradicted, not to be insulted, nay, not even to be disbelieved by us. All experience is against them, yet their word is Hope and shall still forever leave experience a liar."

The year after his friend's death he read his manuscript journals, submitted to him by Miss Sophia Thoreau, with great pleasure and almost surprise, and wrote in his own: —

"1863.

"In reading Henry Thoreau's journal I am very sensible of the vigor of his constitution. That oaken strength which I noted whenever he walked or worked or surveyed wood-lots, the same unhesitating hand with which a field-laborer accosts a piece of work which I should shun as a waste of

strength, Henry shows in his literary task. He has muscle, and ventures on and performs feats which I am forced to decline. In reading him I find the same thoughts, the same spirit that is in me, but he takes a step beyond and illustrates by excellent images that which I should have conveyed in a sleepy generalization. 'T is as if I went into a gymnasium and saw youths leap and climb and swing with a force unapproachable, though their feats are only continuations of my initial grapplings and jumps."

The charge of imitating Emerson, too often made against Thoreau, is idle and untenable, though unfortunately it has received some degree of sanction in high quarters. Surely a much more generous and less superficial criticism was due from such a man and writer as Mr. Lowell to this brave and upright man, and, in his best moods, earnest and religious writer, than he received in the essay on Thoreau. The scant page, at the end of the chapter, of really just and high praise in essential points, and for lofty aim and unusual quality of mind, comes all too late to undo the effect on the reader of ten pages in which Mr. Lowell has used his fine wit in severe criticism, often on trifling matters and even on a low plane, leaving Thoreau under the imputations of indolence and selfishness, to pass over the sweeping assertions that he had no

humor, an unhealthy mind, and discovered nothing.

It may well be that the young Thoreau in his close association, under the same roof with Mr. Emerson, at a time when he had had few cultivated companions, may have unconsciously acquired a trick of voice, or even of expression, and it would have been strange if the village youth should not have been influenced by the older thinker for a time, but legitimately, as Raphael by Perugino. But this is the utmost that can be admitted by any person who really knew the man. Thoreau was incapable of conscious imitation. His faults, if any, lay in exactly the opposite direction. Both men were fearless thinkers, at war indeed against many of the same usages, and interested in the emancipation of the individual. Both went to great Nature to be refreshed and inspired.

There was another lover of Nature, a poet who should have been an artist, who while talking of poetry carried his friend, with a sure eye for the very flowering of the beauty of each season, to the very point at which alone it could be rightly seen, and on the halcyon days. I will give here a chronicle of one of many rambles on auspicious Saturday afternoons.

October 28, 1848.

Journal. "Another walk with Ellery Channing well worth commemoration, if that were possible;

'but no pen could write what we saw; it needs the pencils of all the painters that ever existed to aid the description. We went to White Pond, a pretty little Indian bath, lonely now as Walden once was; we could almost see the sachem in his canoe in a shadowy cove. But making the circuit of the lake on the shore, we came at last to see some marvellous reflections of the colored woods in the water, of such singular beauty and novelty that they held us fast to the spot almost to the going down of the sun. The water was very slightly rippled, which took the proper character from the pines, birches and few oaks which composed the grove; and the sub-marine wood seemed all made of Lombardy poplar with such delicious green, stained by gleams of mahogany from the oaks and streaks of white from the birches, every moment growing more excellent; it was the world seen through a prism, and set Ellery on wonderful Lucretian theories of 'law and design.'

"Ellery as usual found the place with excellent judgment 'where your house should be set,' leaving the wood-paths as they were, which no art could make over; and, after leaving the pond, and a certain dismal dell, whither a man might go to shoot owls or to do self-murder, we struck across an orchard to a steep hill of the right New Hampshire slope, newly cleared of wood, and came presently into rudest woodland landscapes, unknown,

undescribed and hitherto *unwalked* by us Saturday afternoon professors. The sun was setting behind terraces of pines disposed in groups unimaginable by Downings or Loudons, or Capability Browns, but we kept our way and fell into the Duganne trail, as we had already seen the glimpse of his cabin in the edge of the barbarous district we had traversed. Through a clump of apple-trees, over a long ridge with fair outsight of the river, and across the Nut-Meadow brook, we came out upon the banks of the river just below James Brown's. Ellery proposed that we should send the Horticultural Society our notes, 'Took an apple near the White Pond fork of the Duganne trail, an apple of the *Beware-of-this* variety, a true *Touch-me-if-you-dare*, —*Seek-no-further-of-this.* We had much talk of books and lands and arts and farmers. We saw the original *tumulus* or first barrow which the fallen pine-tree makes with its upturned roots, and which after a few years precisely resembles a man's grave. We talked of the great advantage which he has who can turn a verse over all the human race. I read in Wood's "Athenæ Oxoniensis" a score of pages of learned nobodies, of whose once odoriferous reputations not a trace remains in the air, and then I came to the name of some Carew, Herrick, Suckling, Chapman, whose name is as fresh and modern as those of our friends in Boston and London, and all because they could

turn a verse. Only write a dozen lines, and rest on your oars forever; you are dear and necessary to the human race and worth all the old trumpery Plutarchs and Platos and Bacons of the world. . . . Ellery said he had once fancied that there were some amateur trades, as politics, but he found there were none; these too were fenced by Whig barricades. Even walking could not be done by amateurs, but by professors only. In walking with Ellery you shall always see what was never before shown to the eye of man. And yet for how many ages of lonely days has that pretty wilderness of White Pond received the sun and clouds into its transparencies and woven each day new webs of birch and pine, shooting into wilder angles and more fantastic crossing of these coarse threads, which, in the water, have such momentary elegance."

A remark of this friend, as they voyaged on Concord River, seems to have given the hint for the verse, —

> "Thou canst not wave thy staff in air,
> Or dip thy paddle in the lake,
> But it carves the bow of beauty there
> And the ripples in rhymes the oar forsake."

1846.

Journal. "'As for beauty, I need not look beyond an oar's length for my fill of it': I do not

know whether he used the expression with design or no, but my eye rested on the charming play of light on the water which he was striking with his paddle. I fancied I had never seen such color, such transparency, such eddies: it was the hue of Rhine wines, it was jasper and verde-antique, topaz and chalcedony, it was gold and green and chestnut and hazel in bewitching succession and relief without cloud or confusion."

With Judge Hoar Mr. Emerson had from the early days of his Concord residence the bond of their common sister (for as such my father always regarded Miss Elizabeth Hoar), and this tie the Judge strengthened by his character and by his constant friendship, shown at need by acts of great kindness. His father, the Squire, as he was called in all this region, whose austere uprightness called to mind the image of a senator of Rome in her early days, was regarded with reverence and high esteem by Mr. Emerson, although the two men in their tastes and sympathies were very wide apart.

Journal. "The beauty of character takes long time to discover. Who that should come to Concord but would laugh if you told him that Samuel Hoar was beautiful? Yet I thought one day, when he passed, that the rainbow, geometry itself, is not handsomer than that walking sincerity, strait bounded as it is."

Over the Boston road in the coach, and later over the railway, came many valued friends, some of whom prized the conversation with their host, but not the country scenes or friends. But I must mention Agassiz, whose healthy, manly and affectionate presence was always as agreeable as his wonderful knowledge, on the many occasions when he came to lecture,— always refusing to receive the smallest compensation from the Lyceum, saying that he really came to visit his friend, and the lecture was by the way. This kindly man of simple bearing stood one of Mr. Emerson's tests. He writes of him : —

"He is a man to be thankful for, always cordial, full of facts, with unsleeping observation and perfectly communicative. . . . What a harness of buckram city life and wealth puts on our poets and literary men. Alcott complained of lack of simplicity in A ——, B ——, C —— and D —— (late visitors from the city), and Alcott is right touchstone to test them, litmus to detect the acid. Agassiz is perfectly accessible ; has a brave manliness which can meet a peasant, a mechanic, or a fine gentleman with equal fitness."

There were among Mr. Emerson's acquaintance two men of business, always loyal friends to him, for whose powers and resources and virtues he had great regard. The first, his early parishioner, Mr. Abel Adams, who died in 1869 full of years and

virtues, is mentioned several times in this narrative. Of the other, Mr. John M. Forbes, I cannot deny myself the pleasure of inserting his friend's notice in his journal, on a return from a visit to him in his island home in Buzzard's Bay during the last year of the war.

"*October* 12, 1864.

"Returned from Naushon, whither I went on Saturday, 8th, with Professor —— of Oxford University, Mr. ——, ——, and ——. Mr. Forbes at Naushon is the only 'Squire' in Massachusetts, and no nobleman ever understood or performed his duties better. I divided my admiration between the landscape of Naushon and him. He is an American to be proud of. Never was such force, good meaning, good sense, good action combined with such domestic lovely behavior, and such modesty and persistent preference of others. Wherever he moves, he is the benefactor. It is of course that he should shoot well, ride well, sail well, administer railroads well, carve well, keep house well, but he was the best talker also in the company, with the perpetual practical wisdom, seeing always the *working* of the thing,—with the multitude and distinction of his facts (and one detects continually that he has had a hand in everything that has been done), and in the temperance with which he parries all offence, and opens the eyes of his interlocutor without contradicting him. I have been

proud of my countrymen, but I think this is a good country that can breed such a creature as John M. Forbes. There was something dramatic in the conversation of Monday night between Professor ——, Forbes and ——, chiefly; the Englishman being evidently alarmed at the near prospect of the retaliation of America's standing in the identical position soon in which England now and lately has stood to us, and playing the same part towards her. Forbes, a year ago, was in Liverpool and London entreating them to respect their own neutrality, and disallow the piracy and the blockade-running, and hard measure to us in their colonial ports, etc. And now, so soon, the parts were entirely reversed and Professor —— was showing us the power and irritability of England and the certainty that war would follow if we should build and arm a ship in one of our ports, send her out to sea, and *at sea* sell her to their enemy, which would be a proceeding strictly in accordance with her present proclaimed law of nations. . . . When the American Government urged England to make a new treaty to adjust and correct this anomalous rule, the English Government refused, and 't is only ignorance that has prevented the Rebel Confederacy from availing themselves of it.

"At Naushon I recall what Captain John Smith said of the Bermudas, and I think as well of Mr. Forbes's fences, which are cheap and steep—'No

place known hath better walls or a broader ditch.' I came away saying to myself of J. M. F., — How little this man suspects, with his sympathy for men and his respect for lettered and scientific people, that he is not likely ever to meet a man who is superior to himself."

One friend, early known, but then seldom met, — Mr. James Elliot Cabot, — my father became acquainted with soon after the latter left college and entered on the study of architecture, and was attracted and interested by his character and conversation. Mr. Cabot contributed some papers to the "Dial," but my father rarely saw him until after the formation of the Saturday Club when they met at the monthly dinners, and indeed a principal attraction to Mr. Emerson in going thither was the expectation of a talk with his friend. For years he regretted that their paths so seldom came together, not knowing that this friend was kept in reserve to lift the load from his shoulders in his hour of need, and with his presence and generous aid render his last days happy.

For eighteen years after Mr. Emerson came to his Concord home his mother lived with him, a serene and beautiful presence in the household, venerated and loved by her son and daughters, — for Miss Hoar, who should have been her son Charles's wife, shared with my mother the privi-

leges of a daughter's position. Madam Emerson's chamber, the room over the study, was a sort of quiet sanctuary. There the grandchildren were taught to read Mrs. Barbauld's hymns for children. After his mother's death my father writes: "Elizabeth Hoar said the reason why Mother's chamber was always radiant was that the pure in heart shall see God, and she wished to show this fact to the frivolous little woman who pretended sympathy when she died."

Her son had her in mind, among others, when he wrote: "Behold these sacred persons, born of the old simple blood, to whom rectitude is native. See them, — white silver amidst the bronze population, — one, two, three, four, five, six, — I know not how many more, but conspicuous as fire in the night. Each of them can do some deed of the Impossible."

Madam Emerson died in 1853.[1]

The gradual increase of the two-acre lot to a little farm of about nine acres, by the purchase of the neighboring lots for vegetable garden, orchard

1 *Journal*, 1853. "Dr. Frothingham told me that the Latin verse which he appended to the obituary notice of my mother was one which he had read on the tomb of the wife of Charlemagne, in a chapel at Mayence, and it struck him as very tender: —

"Spiritus hæres sit patriæ quæ tristia nescit."

"Let her spirit be heir to the land which knows not a sorrow."

and pasture, gave Mr. Emerson pleasant grounds, protected his study from interruptions incident to too near neighbors, and gave him usually an hour's exercise a day in the care of his growing trees, and incidentally pleasure and health, though he grudged the time from his in-door tasks. The record of these purchases, by the way, and the terms which I find scattered through the account books are an amusing commentary upon his alleged shrewdness. Work with hoe and spade for an hour or two of the day was part of his plan of country life, and he did it at first, but soon found that the garden, with all its little beckoning and commanding arms of purslain and smart-weed and Roman wormwood stretched out, was all too strong and cunning in detaining him from his proper task.

1847.

Journal. "It seems often as if rejection, sturdy rejection were for us: choose well your part, stand fast by your task, and let all else go to ruin if it will. Then instantly the malicious world changes itself into one wide snare and temptation, — escape it who can.

"With brow bent, with firm intent, I go musing in the garden walk. I stoop to pull up a weed that is choking the corn, and find there are two; close behind it is a third, and I reach out my arm to a fourth; behind that there are four thousand and one. I am heated and untuned, and by and

by wake up from my idiot dream of chickweed and red-root, to find that I with adamantine purposes am chickweed and pipergrass myself."

The help of a gardener was found essential even at first.

1847.

Journal. "In an evil hour I pulled down my fence and added Warren's piece to mine; no land is bad, but land is worse. If a man own land, the land owns him. Now let him leave home if he dare! Every tree and graft, every hill of melons, every row of corn, every hedge-shrub, all he has done and all he means to do—stand in his way, like duns, when he so much as turns his back on his house. Then the devotion to these vines and trees and corn hills I find narrowing and poisonous. I delight in long, free walks. These free my brain and serve my body. Long marches would be no hardship to me. My frame is fit for them. I think I compose easily so. But these stoopings and scrapings and fingerings in a few square yards of garden are dispiriting, drivelling, and I seem to have eaten lotus, to be robbed of all energy, and I have a sort of catalepsy or unwillingness to move, and have grown peevish and poor-spirited."

His friends, Mr. George Bradford and Henry Thoreau, at different times and during their stay

at his house, took the care of the garden into their skilful hands, greatly to his relief, though he came out when he could and worked with them, before the addition of new fields, the lots whence the thirty cords of wood for the fires must be cut and hauled home, and the purchase of a horse and one or two cows required that a man should be hired to give his whole time and attention to the farm. This was a relief to my father, but there had been in the earlier irregular husbandry much to gild the drudgery when his good and manly friends, whose greater skill and practical knowledge of the garden he admired, worked near him. His friend Channing, the poet, once cut his wood for him, and Thoreau planted his barren pasture, close by the Walden hermitage, which was on his friend's land, with pines and larches, and Mr. Alcott, in 1847, fashioned from gnarled limbs of pine, oak with knotty excrescences and straight trunks of cedar, a fantastic but pleasing structure, some hundred steps from the house, for a retired study for his friend.

In this work he was helped by Mr. Thoreau, whose practical mind was chafed at seeing a building, with no plan, feeling its way up, as it were, dictated at each step by the suggestion of the crooked bough that was used and necessarily often altered. He said, "I feel as if I were nowhere doing nothing." When it was nearly done some

one said, "It looks like a church." The idea was not to be tolerated by the transcendental architect, so the porch had to come down for its look of untimely sanctimony.

Thoreau drove the nails, and drove them well, but as Mr. Alcott made the eaves curve upward for beauty, and lined the roof with velvet moss and *sphagnum*, Nature soon reclaimed it. Indeed Madam Emerson *naively* called it "The Ruin" when it was fresh from the hand of the builder. In spite of its real beauty, which drew many people to see it, the draughts (for it was full of apertures for doors and windows) and the mosquitoes from the meadow close by made it untenable, and my father never used it as a study.

It is pleasant to find in a later journal this record of graceful services done by John Thoreau, the older brother of Henry and companion of the happy river voyage, who died in early life.

"Long ago I wrote of Gifts and neglected a capital example. John Thoreau, Jr., one day put a blue-bird's box on my barn, — fifteen years ago, it must be, — and there it still is, with every summer a melodious family in it, adorning the place and singing his praises. There's a gift for you which cost the giver no money, but nothing which he bought could have been so good.

"I think of another quite inestimable: John Thoreau knew how much I should value a head of

little Waldo, then five years old. He came to me and offered to take him to a daguerreotypist who was then in town, and he, Thoreau, would see it well done. He did it and brought me the daguerre, which I thankfully paid for. A few months after, my boy died, and I have since to thank John Thoreau for that wise and gentle piece of friendship."

The serious and loving little boy, whose image was thus preserved, followed his father from the study to the garden in those few years and brightened all the hours. His solicitous speech, "Papa, I am afraid you will dig your leg," has been elsewhere told to illustrate Mr. Emerson's too evident unhandiness with tools. I will tell here another saying of little Waldo which his father treasured as showing his innate refinement. When he carried him to the Circus and the clown played his pranks with the ring-master, the little boy looked up with troubled eyes and said, "Papa, the funny man makes me want to go home."

My father soon found that his personal handling of hoe and spade was too expensive, and willingly laid them down, and although, if rain threatened, he would come out to the hayfield to rake, his gardening was confined, within my recollection, to pruning his trees and picking up pears and apples. In his wealth of Gravensteins and Pumpkin-Sweetings, Seckels, Flemish Beauties and Beurré Diels,

he took delight and pride, groaned to see the September gale rudely throw down his treasures before the "Cattle-show" Exhibition, and always sent thither specimens from his garden. One day after this exhibition a party of gentlemen visited his orchard who were introduced to him by his neighbor, Mr. Bull, as a committee of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. He smiled with modest pride at having his little orchard thus honored, but the Hon. S—— D——, the chairman, said, "Mr. Emerson, the committee have called to see the soil which produces such poor specimens of such fine varieties." Perhaps it was a damp year, and in that low land the pears were rusty, but in all years the proprietor saw the gold through the rust. In his journal he answers some caviller who has said, "Your pears cost you more than mine which I buy." "Yes, they are costly, but we all have expensive vices. You play at billiards, I at pear-trees." He likes to note that kind "Nature never makes us a present of a fine fruit or berry, pear or peach without also packing up along with it a seed or two of the same." The orchard throve and in time became a source of profit, but pears and apples were to him more than so many barrels of sweet and perfumed pulp to eat or sell. He read in Downing's work on Fruit Culture the theory of Van Mons, of taking seedlings in a "state of amelioration" and, by successive plant-

ings of the first seeds of the best, surely obtaining in five or six generations a superior fruit, a perfect pear from a harsh, half-wild fruit. Here, as everywhere, Mr. Emerson found new evidence that barriers and limitations were not really, but only seemingly fixed; that rightly aimed effort could break them down; that all nature was flowing and there was always room for hope.

In the 1842 Journal he writes: "Delight in Van Mons and his pear in a state of melioration; to be liquid and plastic, — that our reading or doing or knowing should react on us, that is all in all."

In the following observation too he saw his old and favorite law of compensation, blessing all in time: "While the seeds of the oldest varieties of good fruits mostly yield inferior sorts, seed taken from recent varieties of bad fruit and reproduced uninterruptedly for several generations will certainly produce good fruit."

A sentence, perhaps for use at a cattle-show address, shows what apples were worth to him: —

"The Newtown Pippins, gentlemen; are they not the Newton Pippins? or is not this the very pippin that demonstrated to Sir Isaac Newton the fall of the world, — not the fall of Adam, — but of the moon to the earth and of universal gravity? Well, here they are, a barrel of them; every one of them good to show gravitation and good to eat; every

one as sound as the moon. What will you give me for a barrel of moons?"

He delighted in the use of his lands by aboriginal tenants, Indians or gypsies, when they wandered through the town, or older and wilder tenants yet: —

> "The sun athwart the cloud thought it no sin
> To use my land to put his rainbows in."

Though from the gardener's point of view he marked with vindictive eye the ravages of his wife's roses and his grapes and plums by insects, yet his eye was always open for beauty in humble things, though the direction of the motion affected its charm: "Rosebugs and wasps appear best when flying: they sail like little pinnaces of the air. I admired them most *when flying away from my garden.*"

> "Solar insect on the wing
> In the garden murmuring,
> Soothing with thy summer horn
> Swains by winter pinched and worn."

His own want of skill in conducting farming operations really heightened the pleasure he took in the executive ability of his neighbors.

1847.

Journal. "My young friend believed his calling to be musical, yet without jewsharp, catgut or rosin. Yes, but there must be demonstration.

Look over the fence yonder in Captain Abel's land.[1] "There 's a musician for you, who knows how to make men dance for him in all weathers; and all sorts of men, paddies, felons, farmers, carpenters, painters, yes, and trees and grapes and ice and stone, hot days and cold days. Beat that, Menetrier de Mendau, if you can. Knows how to make men saw, dig, mow and lay stone-wall, and how to make trees bear fruit God never gave them, and grapes from France and Spain yield pounds of clusters at his door. He saves every drop of sap as if it were his own blood. His trees are full of brandy, you would think he watered them with wine. See his cows, see his swine, see his horses, — and he, the musician that plays the jig which they all must dance, biped and quadruped and centipede, is the plainest stupidest look-

[1] This passage is printed and by mistake attributed to Thoreau by Mr. Sanborn in his *Life of Thoreau*. Mr. Emerson and his Concord friends seem to have now and then submitted to each other scraps of their recent writing on stray sheets. They also copied some of these passages that chanced to please them. Thus mistakes have occurred in publishing their posthumous writings. The above passage however is certainly by Mr. Emerson and occurs in this form in his journal, C D, for 1847.

The little Essay on Prayers included, in good faith, in *The Yankee in Canada, and Other Papers* of Mr. Thoreau, posthumously published, was written by Mr. Emerson and first published in the *Dial*. It included a prayer in verse written by Mr. Thoreau, and the mistake occurred very naturally, as a copy of the whole paper in Thoreau's handwriting was found among his papers.

ing harlequin in a coat of no colors. But his are the woods and the waters, the hills and meadows. With a stroke of his instrument he danced a thousand tons of gravel from yonder blowing sand heap on to the bog-meadow beneath us where now the English grass is waving; with another he terraced the sand-hill and covered it with peaches and grapes; with another he sends his lowing cattle every spring up to Peterboro' to the mountain pastures."

"Cyrus Stow wanted his bog meadow brought into grass. He offered Antony Colombe, Sol Wetherbee, and whosoever else, seed and manure and team and the whole crop; which they accepted and went to work, and reduced the tough roots, the tussocks of grass, the uneven surface and gave the whole field a good rotting and breaking and sunning, and now he finds no longer any difficulty in getting good English grass from the smooth and friable land. What Stow does with his field, what the Creator does with his planet, the Yankees are now doing with America. It will be friable, arable, habitable to men and angels yet!"

But the exigencies of the farm brought him into constant relation with his immediate neighbors, a circumstance agreeable to him and always, I think, to them, and whether the farm might prosper or no, as a result, one crop he certainly harvested; all

was grist that came to his mill. He admired the simplicity and fortitude of the Massachusetts farmers' life in those days and to see and record the stern rustic economies.

"The farmer gets two hundred dollars while the merchant gets two thousand. But the farmer's two hundred is far safer and is more likely to remain to him. It was heavy to lift from the soil, but it was for that reason more carefully bestowed and will stay where it was put, so that the two sums turn out at last to be equivalent."

After the railroad came and brought Concord practically as near to the city as Cambridge had been, changed the old corn-and-pumpkin farming, with oxen for working cattle, to modern "Sauce-gardening" with improved implements and horse-machinery, and the town, instead of living mainly its own life, became largely a sleeping-place for persons who exercised their professions or business in Boston, he notices that the young men have an amateur air that their fathers never had; (1848) "they look as if they might be railroad agents any day. We shall never see Cyrus Hubbard or Ephraim Wheeler or Grass-and-oats or Oats-and-grass, old Barrett or Hosmer in the next generation. These old Saxons have the look of pine-trees and apple-trees, and might be the sons got between the two; conscientious laborers with a science born in them from out the sap-vessels of these savage sires."

He saw with awe and veneration the equality of the farmer to his task and his bending the apparently crushing forces of Nature to work for him, — triumphs through obedience. "We cannot quite pull down and degrade our life and divest it of its poetry. The day-laborer is popularly reckoned as standing at the foot of the social scale; yet talk with him, he is saturated with the beautiful laws of the world. His measures are the hours, the morning and night, the solstice, and the geometry, the astronomy and all the lovely accidents of nature play through his mind continual music."

> "He planted where the Deluge ploughed,
> His hired hands were wind and cloud,
> His eye detects the gods concealed
> In the hummock of the field."

When in 1857 Mr. Emerson was invited to give the annual address before the Middlesex Agricultural Society, his speech, then called, "The Man with the Hoe" (since printed under the title "Farming"), showed that if not skilful with the implement itself, he had not lived in the country in vain, and had seen and recognized the great lines on which the farmer must lay out his year's work.

Mr. Edmund Hosmer, a farmer of the older New England type, thrifty and sturdy, conservative yet independent, was Mr. Emerson's neighbor for many years, and during that time his adviser and helper in his rustic affairs. For his character

and opinion Mr. Emerson had great respect, and in his walks he liked to go by Mr. Hosmer's farm and find him ploughing in his field where they would have a chat on matters of agriculture, politics or philosophy. One of these conversations is reported in the "Dial" under title Agriculture of Massachusetts.

Close by his house, on the slope of the opposite hill, lived George Minot, a descendant of one of the early Concord families, — dying out in the male line with him, one who had never been in the railroad cars, nor but once in Boston, when with the Concord company he marched there in 1812, but one who knew Concord field and forest by heart, — a man somewhat of the Rip van Winkle type, then more common in Concord than now, who, though he kept a cow and raised corn and "crook-necks" in his little field, eked out the larder of himself and his sister, the village tailoress, with duck and partridges, horn-pout and pickerel. He valued and took much leisure, and liked to gossip with Mr. Emerson over the fence about "the old bow-arrow times" when, as he averred he had heard from the fathers, deer and otter and raccoons were common in Concord and moose had been shot here.

"Here is George Minot, not so much a citizen as a part of nature, in perfect *rapport* with the trout in the stream, the bird in the wood or pond-side and the plant in the garden; whatsoever is

early or rare or nocturnal, game or agriculture, he knows, being awake when others sleep, or asleep when others wake: snipe, pelican, or breed of hogs; or grafting or cutting; woodcraft or bees."

In later years Mr. Emerson had the fortune to have Mr. Sam Staples as a neighbor, who with his varied gifts and experiences as ex-jailer, auctioneer, skilful modern farmer and sensible, friendly man was a tower of strength, whether there were suspicious tramps around, or carryall or cow must be bought, a man or horse or farm implement to be borrowed, or advice on any practical subject was required. He gives Mr. Emerson the character of a "first rate neighbor and one who always kept his fences up," and I know that my father was always sure of finding hearty help in any emergency, great or small, from this best of neighbors.

1866.

Journal. "I like my neighbor T.'s manners: he has no deference, but a good deal of kindness, so that you see that his good offices come from no regard for you, but purely from his character."

"Self respect always commands. I see it here in a family little known, but each of whose members, without other gifts or advantages above the common, have that in lieu of all: teaching that wealth, fashion, learning, talent, garden, fine house, servants, can be omitted, if you have quiet deter-

mination to keep your own way with good sense and energy. The best of it is that the family I speak of do not suspect the fact."

He was blessed with many good neighbors, more than can be properly named here, and his experience led him to write: —

"1842.

"Those of us who do not believe in communities believe in neighborhoods, and that the Kingdom of Heaven may consist of such."

1836.

Journal. "Talking last night with E. H., I sought to illustrate the sunny side of every man, as compared with his sour and pompous side, by the two entrances of all our Concord houses. The front door is very fair to see, painted green, with a knocker, but it is always bolted, and you might as well beat on the wall as tap there; but the farmer slides round the house into a quiet back door that admits him at once to his warm fireside and loaded table."

A few anecdotes scattered through the journals will properly enough find place in the Book of the Social Circle and recall to the senior members pictures and figures of the Concord of their youth.

George Minot told my father of old Abel Davis's visit to Temple, New Hampshire, and how one day while fishing there he pulled up a monstrous pick-

erel. "Wall," said he, "who 'd ever ha' thought of finding *you* up here in Temple? You an' a slice o' pork will make Viny and me a good breakfast."

Another neighbor of a practical turn of mind thus criticised the working of the solar system: —

"This afternoon the eclipse. Peter Howe did not like it, for his rowan would not make hay; and he said 'the sun looked as if a nigger was putting his head into it.'"

As this forcible, though unpoetic imagery amused Mr. Emerson, so, as an optimist, he was struck by the strong counter-statement of a Concord worthy, of other days, that "mankind was a damned rascal." He quotes another as saying that "his son might, if he pleased, buy a gold watch; it did not matter much what he did with his money; he might put it on his back: for his part, he thought it best to put it down his neck and get the good of it."

He notes that the "elective affinities" work in Concord as elsewhere: —

"Old X. was never happy but when he could fight. Y. was the right person to marry into his family. He was n't the worst man you ever saw, but brother to him."

His doctrine of Compensation receives fresh illustration in the remark of his friend about one of those amphibious persons, now, I fear, extinct on the shores of the Musketaquid.

"Channing said he would never, were he an insurer, insure any life that had any infirmity of goodness in it. It is Goodwin who will catch pickerel: if you have any moral traits you will never get a bite."

"Henry Thoreau told me as we walked this afternoon a good story about a boy who went to school with him, Wentworth, who resisted the school mistress's command that the children should bow to Dr. Heywood and other gentlemen as they went by, and when Dr. Heywood stood waiting and cleared his throat with a Hem! Wentworth said, 'You need not *hem*, Doctor, I shan't bow.'"

"Deacon Parkman, Thoreau tells, lived in the house he now occupies and kept a store close by. He hung out a salt fish for a sign, and it hung so long, and grew so hard and black and deformed that the deacon forgot what thing it was, and nobody in town knew, but being examined chemically it proved to be salt fish. But duly every morning the deacon hung it on its peg."

He records old Mr. Wesson the tavern-keeper's philosophical distinction, when he said, "I thought I was asleep, but I knowed I was n't;" and the self-restraint and caution of another village magnate, who, reading his newspaper in the grocery, always carefully read the passage through three times before venturing a comment to his neighbors. Another loyal Concord man, B., the carpenter, reading

of the price of building-lots in rising Chicago, said, "Can't hardly believe that any lands can be worth so much money, so far off."

In those days the last struggles were going on between the stage-coach and freight team against their terrible rival the railroad train.

"The teamsters write on their teams, 'No monopoly, Old Union Line, Fitchburg, Groton, etc.' On the guide-boards they paint, 'Free trade and teamsters' rights.'"

When the wave of excitement stirred up by the "Rochester knockings," attributed to departed spirits, struck Concord (not with any force, however), the communications of the "spirits" seemed hardly to justify their importunity. Mr. Emerson spoke of it as the "rat and mouse revelation," and said of the local prophets, quoting the speech of Hotspur to his wife when she begs for his secret, promising not to reveal it: —

> "For I well believe
> Thou wilt not utter what thou dost not know,
> And thus far will I trust thee, gentle Kate."

Mr. Emerson cheerfully assumed such duties as the town put upon him. Almost immediately on his coming to Concord he was chosen a member of the School Committee, and later he served on it for many years. He never felt that he had the smallest executive ability, and on the village committee,

as later on the Board of Overseers of the University, he preserved an unduly modest attitude, seldom speaking, but admiring the working and reasoning of others. Declamation and reading always interested him, and for them he would speak his best word at committee meetings or school exhibitions. When he went to visit a school he forgot that he was an inspector, and became a learner. Here is a characteristic entry in the journal for 1854. (The italics are mine.)

"The way that young woman keeps her school *was the best lesson I received* at the Preparatory School to-day. She knew so much and carried it so well in her head and gave it out so well that the pupils had quite enough to think of and not an idle moment to waste in noise or disorder. 'T is the best recipe I know for school discipline."

The sight of clear-eyed girls and manly boys was sure to awaken his affectionate interest, and a good recitation of a poem never failed to move him and make him wish to know more of the young speaker.

"I told the school company at the Town Hall this afternoon that I felt a little like the old gentleman who had dandled ten sons and daughters of his own in succession on his knee, and when his grandchild was brought to him, 'No,' he said, 'he had cried Kitty, Kitty, long enough.' And yet when I heard now these recitations and exercises I was willing to feel new interest still. . . . I

suggested for the encouragement, or the warning, of the parents, my feeling to-day that the new generation was an improved edition of the adult. . . . In conclusion I said that it was plain that the end of the institutions of the town and the town itself was Education."

Here are notes of another appeal to his townsmen to prize their schools : —

"First see that the expense be for teaching, or that the school be kept for the greatest number of days and of scholars. Then that the best teachers and the best apparatus be provided. . . . *School*, — because it is the *cultus* of our time and place, fit for the republic, fit for the times, which no longer can be reached and commanded by the Church.

"What an education in the public spirit of Massachusetts has been — the war songs, speeches and reading of the schools! Every district-school has been an anti-slavery convention for two or three years last past.

"This town has no sea-port, no cotton, no shoe-trade, no water-power, no gold, lead, coal or rock-oil, no marble ; nothing but wood and grass, — not even ice and granite, our New England staples, for the granite is better in Acton and Fitchburg, and our ice, Mr. Tudor said, had bubbles in it. We are reduced then to manufacture school-teachers, which we do for the southern and western mar-

ket. I advise the town to stick to that staple and make it the best in the world. It is your lot in the urn; and it is one of the commanding lots. Get the best apparatus, the best overseer, and turn out the best possible article. Mr. Agassiz says, 'I mean to make the Harvard Museum such that no European naturalist can afford to stay away from it.' Let the town of Concord say as much for its school. We will make our schools such that no family which has a new home to choose can fail to be attracted hither as to the one town in which the best education can be secured. This is one of those long prospective economies which is sure and remunerative." [1]

Always believing that "evil is only good in the making," and mischief useful energy run wild, he says, "There is no police so effective as a good hill and wide pasture in the neighborhood of the village where the boys can run and play and dispose of their superfluous strength of spirits to their own delight and the annoyance of nobody," and in

[1] In this speech, made in the last year of the war, he did not use the word Teacher in a restricted sense. For he thought of all Concord's sons and daughters who had gone forth from the village, — whether carrying learning in spelling-books and readers, or freedom and equal rights on bayonets, or commerce on railroads, or New England thrift and orderly life in their example, — as sowing broadcast through the land seeds of virtue and civility.

his last years he was readily interested in a plan for procuring a public play-ground and laid aside a sum of money towards it. He served on the Library Committee for many years, and when Mr. William Munroe made his noble gift to the town of the Library Building, Mr. Emerson made the address on the occasion of its opening.

In 1839 he was elected a member of the Social Circle. This gave him opportunity to meet socially and in his turn to entertain many of his townsmen with whom otherwise from his secluded habits and scholarly pursuits he would hardly have formed acquaintance.

In 1844 (Dec. 17th) he writes to a friend in Boston: "Much the best society I have ever known is a club in Concord called the Social Circle, consisting always of twenty-five of our citizens, doctor, lawyer, farmer, trader, miller, mechanic, etc., solidest of men, who yield the solidest of gossip. Harvard University is a wafer compared to the solid land which my friends represent. I do not like to be absent from home on Tuesday evenings in winter."

His long lecturing trips to the West prevented his attending meetings so much as he would have liked. He was for forty-three years a member; the last meeting he attended being the celebration of the hundredth year of the existence of the club which occurred only a month before his death. He was then the senior member.

Although few of the townspeople knew — what I am sure even the few extracts from his journals here introduced show — with what human interest he watched them, how he praised the wit, or courage or skill of the seniors, and delighted in the beauty or sturdiness of the girls and boys that passed him daily, yet his relation to the town first and last was pleasant. In speaking to his townsfolk in the Lyceum he never wrote down to them, but felt them entitled to his best thoughts.

"Do not cease to utter them," he says to himself, "and make them as pure of all dross as if thou wert to speak to sages and demi-gods, and be no whit ashamed if not one, yea, not one in the assembly, should give sign of intelligence. Is it not pleasant to you — unexpected wisdom? depth of sentiment in middle life? persons that in the thick of the crowd are true kings and gentlemen without the harness and the envy of the throne?"

He held to the faith that all "differences are superficial, that they all have one fundamental nature," which it was for him to find and awaken. And his confidence was justified. In a paper full of interesting reminiscences Mr. Albee mentions talking with a Concord farmer who said he had heard all Mr. Emerson's lectures before the Lyceum and added — "and understood 'em too."

But I must also tell that Mrs. Storer relates that her mother, Madam Hoar, seeing Ma'am Bemis, a

neighbor who came in to work for her, drying her hands and rolling down her sleeves one afternoon somewhat earlier than usual, asked her if she was going so soon: "Yes, I 've got to go now. I 'm going to Mr. Emerson's lecture." "Do you understand Mr. Emerson?" "Not a word, but I like to go and see him stand up there and look as if he thought every one was as good as he was."

A lady tells me that after Mr. Emerson had given his lecture on Plato (later printed in "Representative Men") in Concord, she overtook on her way homewards a worthy but literal-minded old lady and began to speak of the lecture they had just heard. But her neighbor was displeased and said that "if those old heathen really did such things as Mr. Emerson said they did, the less said about them the better." The offending passage was this. (The italics are mine.)

"Plato especially has no external biography. If he had lover, wife, or children, we hear nothing of them. *He ground them into paint.* As a good chimney burns its smoke, so a philosopher converts the value of all his fortunes into his intellectual performances."

The town called upon him to speak for her on her great days. Having in 1835 told the story of the godly and earnest men who settled and established the town and of those who defended its soil

from the oppressor, and two years later at the dedication of the Battle Monument compressed that chronicle into the few simple lines of the Hymn, it fell to him to tell how the grandsons of those patriots had been true in their hour of trial, when in 1867 the monument was built to those who did not return. Last, in his failing years, he spoke a few words as the bronze Minute Man took his stand to guard through the centuries the North Bridge then restored.

The people of the village felt his friendly and modest attitude towards them and were always kind. Is it not written in our Book of Chronicles what effective and speedy action was taken in the silent night by who shall say how many of the past and present venerable members of the Social Circle, when the only bad neighbor he ever had sought to blackmail Mr. Emerson by moving an unsightly building on to the lot before his house?[1] And at the burning of his house what a multitude of good men and women came with speed and worked with zeal to help and to save, in some cases at peril of their lives.

And in his later days, when his powers began to

[1] A number of the youths of Concord procured hooks, ropes and ladder, and, uniformed in green baize jackets lent from Mr. Rice's store, silently marched in the night to the spot, pulled the old frame down with a crash, and withdrew with some speed, vainly pursued by the enraged owner.

fail and words failed him and he became bewildered, how often he found helpers and protectors start from the ground, as it were, at his need.

In all his forty-eight years' life in the village I do not believe he ever encountered any incivility or indignity, except in one trifling instance, which I shall tell, not as indicating any ill will, for it was the act of two or three idle hangers-on of the bar-room, but because it gives an interesting picture. It was the practice of the bar-room wits to revenge themselves for Dr. Bartlett's courageous and sincere war upon their temple and inspiring spirit, by lampooning him in doggerel verse and attributing his florid complexion to other causes than riding in all weathers in the humane service of his neighbors. One morning there was a sign hung out at the Middlesex stable with inscription insulting to Dr. Bartlett. Mr. Emerson came down to the Post Office, stopped beneath the sign, read it (watched with interest by the loafers at tavern, grocery and stables) and did not leave the spot till he had beaten it down with his cane, and, I think, broken it. In the afternoon when I went to school I remember my mortification at seeing a new board hanging there with a painting of a man with tall hat, long nose and hooked cane raised aloft, and, lest the portrait might not be recognized, the inscription, "Rev. R. W. E. knocking down the Sign." He did not immediately find a champion

and the board remained, I believe, for the rest of the day.

Mr. Emerson's honor for humanity, and respect for humble people and for labor, were strong characteristics.

Of servants he was kindly and delicately considerate, and was always anxious while they were present for fear that the thoughtless speech of any one might wound their feelings or be misinterpreted. The duty to the employed of high speech and example must never be forgotten; their holidays and hours of rest, their attachments and their religious belief, must be respected. He was quick to notice any fine trait of loyalty, courage or unselfishness in them, or evidence of refined taste. "For the love of poetry let it be remembered that my copy of Collins, after much search, was found smuggled away into the oven in the kitchen" [the old brick oven, used only for Thanksgiving bakings].

"The king's servant is the king himself," quoted, I think, from the Persian, and the verse, —

> "At mihi succurrit pro Ganymede manus"
> (My own right hand my cup-bearer shall be), —

were favorite mottoes, and from boyhood to age he was as independent as might be of service from others. He built his own fires, going to the woodpile in the yard in all weather for armfuls as he needed fuel; he almost always walked to and from

trains, carried his own valise, and when going to lecture in a neighboring town, drove himself. He always kept one or two ears of Indian corn in his cabinet to catch the horse with, if it got out of the pasture.

Napoleon was, I am sure, greatly raised in his estimation by his speech to Mrs. Balcombe, when on a rugged path at St. Helena they met porters with heavy burdens whom she ordered to stand aside. Napoleon drew her back, saying, "Respect the burden, Madam." This anecdote my father often recalled to us as a lesson. I think that he was always regarded with affectionate respect by the servants. At a hotel he made a point of inquiring for the porter or "boots" to remunerate him before departing.

Another anecdote which my father often set before his children as a lesson in behavior, a story which I have never been able to trace to its source, though it sounds like one of Plutarch's, was to the effect that Cæsar on a journey to Gaul lodged for a night with his officers at the hut of a poor man, who, in his zeal for their entertainment, prepared a salad of asparagus for his guests with a hair-oil, which, tasting, the officers expressed disgust, but Cæsar frowned on them and ate his portion, bidding them honor their host's pains on their behalf.

Mr. Emerson's own instinct in matters of eating and drinking was Spartan. His tastes were sim-

ple, and he took whatever was set before him with healthy appetite, but hardly knowing or asking what it might be. Rarely he noticed and praised some dish in an amusing manner, but, should any mention of ingredients arise, he always interrupted with "No! No! It is made of violets; it has no common history," or other expressions to that purpose. At the height of the epoch when philosophers and reformers sought him constantly and sat as guests at his table shuddering at flesh or stimulants, or products of slave-labor, or foreign luxuries, or even at roots because they grew downwards, he was so hospitable to every new thought or project that aimed to make life more spiritual, that he was willing to try what might lie in it; and when his guests were gone, he on one or two occasions tried their experiment, even went to his study direct from his bedroom in the morning for several days, and there had bread and water brought to him, instead of the comfortable family meal and the two cups of coffee to which he was accustomed; but his strong sense showed him at once that those very means undid what they aimed at, by making questions of eating and drinking of altogether too much importance, and also unfitting the body and mind for their best work, — and temperance, not abstinence, became, as before, his custom without effort or further thought about so slight a matter which filled smaller men's horizon. It did not escape his

notice that "A. bears wine better than B. bears water."

1839.

Journal. "Always a reform is possible behind the last reformer's word, and so we must stop somewhere in our over-refining or life would be impossible. . . . Temperance that knows itself is not temperance. That you cease to drink wine or coffee or tea is no true temperance if you still desire them and think of them; there is nothing angelic there. It is thus far only prudence."

On the question of signing pledges of total abstinence from ardent spirits, he wrote in 1835: —

"No; I shall not deprive my example of all its value by abdicating my freedom on that point. It shall be always my example, the spectacle to all whom it may concern of my spontaneous action at the time."

While he valued, and recommended to others, especially if dyspeptic, an occasional feast or club dinner, — so it did not come too often, — for its good effects on body and mind, and liked to give a dinner party for a friend at his own house, he desired that the preparations be not too elaborate or removed from the usual mode of living, lest the true order be reversed, and hospitality of table and service be more evident than that of thought and affection. He placed wine before guests of dis-

creet age and habit and took it with them, seldom more than one glass; and he never took it when alone. He had learned to smoke in college and resumed the habit in very moderate degree when he was about fifty years old, when in company, but in his later years he occasionally smoked a small fraction of a cigar with much comfort, and then laid it by until another time. In the journal of 1866 he wrote: "The scatter-brain Tobacco. Yet a man of no conversation should smoke."

In dress he was always neat and inconspicuous, wearing black clothes and silk hat in the city, and dark gray with soft felt hat in the country. He once wrote: "How difficult it is to me to see certain particulars. I have gone to many dinners and parties with instructions from home and with my own wish to notice the dress of the *men*, and can never remember to look for it."

When the gospel of cold bathing was preached in New England and the ascetic instinct led so many good people to practise it in a dangerous degree, enjoying breaking ice in their tubs on sharp mornings, or, in default of a temperature of 32° Fahrenheit, pumping long to get the water from the very bottom of the well to hurl down by gallons on their poor bodies from the heights of a shower-bath, Mr. Emerson, fortunately for his health, entered into this reform with circumspection. His remarks on the bath, when he came down to breakfast, were often amusing: —

"I begin to believe that the composition of water must be one part Hydrogen and three parts Conceit. Nothing so self-righteous as the morning bath — the sleeping with windows open. The Bath! the cutaneous sublime; the extremes meet, the bitter-sweet, the pail of pleasure and pain, — Oh, if an enemy had done this!"

Mr. Emerson was tall, — six feet in his shoes, — erect until his latter days, neither very thin nor stout in frame, with rather narrow and unusually sloping shoulders, and long neck, but very well poised head, and a dignity of carriage. His eyes were very blue, his hair dark brown, his complexion clear and always with good color. His features were pronounced, but refined, and his face very much modelled, as a sculptor would say.

Walking was his exercise and he was an admirable walker, light, erect and strong of limb. He almost always refused offers to ride in a carriage, and seldom on journeys availed himself of omnibuses or cabs. He would walk across the city to his train, carrying usually his rather heavy leathern travelling bag in his hand at such a speed that a companion must run to keep up with him, and this without apparent effort or any noticeable effect of overheat or shortness of breath. "When you have worn out your shoes," he said, "the strength of the sole-leather has gone into the fibre of your body."

Once or twice I remember his riding on horse-

back, but in this he had no practice. On his journey to California, however, as Mr. Forbes's guest, he rode for a day or two in the Yo-Semite Valley trip with pleasure and without mishap. His old pair of skates always hung in his study-closet, and he went to the solitary coves of Walden with his children when he was fifty years old and skated with them, moving steadily forward, as I remember, secure and erect. In summer, but only on the very hot days, he liked to go into Walden, and swam strongly and well.

When in 1857 he went into camp with his friends of the Adirondac Club (Agassiz, S. G. Ward, W. J. Stillman, Dr. Jeffries Wyman, John Holmes, Judge E. R. Hoar, J. R. Lowell, Dr. Estes Howe, Horatio Woodman), he bought a rifle and learned to shoot with it; this I know, for he gave it to me on his return, and instructed me (by no means with the readiness of a sportsman) in loading and firing it, on Mr. Heywood's hill. I believe, however, he never shot at any living thing with it. He was paddled out by a guide with a torch at night, told there was a deer on the shore and made out to see a "square mist," but did not shoot.

He took interest in wild flowers, birds and animals in their native haunts, —

"Loved the wild rose, and left it on its stalk," —

and for garden flowers never cared so much.

"Everybody feels that they appeal to finer senses than his own and looks wishfully around in hope that possibly this friend or that may be nobler furnished than he to see and read them. . . . Especially they are sent to ceremonies and assemblies, sacred or festal or funereal, because on occasions of passion or sentiment there may be higher appreciation of these delicate wonders."

"To the fir [balsam] tree by my study window come the ground-sparrow, oriole, cedar-bird, common cross-bill, yellow-bird, goldfinch, cat-bird, particolored warbler and robin."

He respected and praised the useful domestic animals, though utterly unskilful with them, a lack which he regretted, and enjoyed seeing the tact and courage of others in managing them.

1862.

Journal. "I like people who can do things. When Edward and I struggled in vain to drag our big calf into the barn, the Irish girl put her finger in the calf's mouth and led her in directly."

He liked to talk with drivers and stable-men, and witnessed with keen pleasure Rarey's performance and wrote it into one of his lectures, saying that all horses hereafter would neigh on his birthday. In his later years he went with zeal to Magner's secret horse-training lecture in the stable of the Middlesex Hotel, carrying with him two some-

what astonished English visitors. Pet animals he cared nothing for and shrank from touching them, though he admired the beauty and grace of cats. Lately I received an earnest appeal from a lady, writing for "St. Nicholas" on the Canine Friends of our Authors and Statesmen, for anecdotes showing my father's liking for dogs, and particulars of the names, color and breed of his canine friends, and especially asking for any anecdote of his affectionate relations with dogs that could be embodied in one of the excellent sketches for which that periodical is famous. I was only able to tell her of the delight and sympathy with which he used to read to his family, how when the Rev. Sydney Smith was asked by a lady for a motto to be engraved on the collar of her little dog Spot, the divine suggested the line from Macbeth, "Out! damnèd Spot!"

So little of the clergyman or pastor remained with my father that it was a surprise when any evidence of that part of his life and special training appeared. But now and then he would quote Scripture in an unexpected and amusing manner, never irreverently, and the quotations were always unusual and often a little perverted from their originals. When urged to any doing or spending that he did not feel like undertaking he would say, "The strength of the Egyptians is to sit still." If the children dawdled in getting off to school, he

would look at his watch and cry, "Flee as the roe from the hand of the hunter!" or did I come home laden with packages from the store, he would say, "Issachar is a strong ass; he croucheth between two burdens." He spoke of the villagers who had become possessed of the "spiritualist" revelation as "wizards that peep and mutter." When a guest had looked askance at such grapes as the frost in his low garden had allowed to ripen imperfectly, he would say, "Surely our labor is in vain in the Lord," and when the dinner-bell rang, and almost every member of the family, remembering something he or she had meant to do before the meal, would disappear, he said, "Our bell should have engraved on it 'I laughed on them and they believed me not,'" and this at last was done. Once in his early housekeeping, at a time when Mr. Emerson was very busy, a distant relative came a-cousining, and there was reason to believe that he planned to take the afternoon stage, but he was not very zealous about departing, and the stage was not seen until it had just passed the house, — the last stage and it was Saturday. Mr. Emerson shouted and ran to overtake it and happily succeeded. On his return, after seeing the guest safely ensconced, his wife smiled and said she feared that his zeal on behalf of his relative was a little noticeable. "Yes," he said, "my running was like the running of Ahimaez the son of Zadoc."

His position as a scholar and philosopher was the stronger that he had the fortunate gift, not altogether common in that class, of a sense of humor. Few Philistines were more aware of the amusing side that his class presented to world's people. He felt that they were mostly overweighted in one direction; in fact bewails the lack of "whole men" everywhere, and speaks of those who are "an appendage to a great fortune, or to a legislative majority, or to the Massachusetts Revised Statutes, or to some barking and bellowing Institution, Association or Church." But of the weaknesses too often found in the bookish man he was quite aware. Here, under the heading *Culture*, is a list of tests: "Set a dog on him: Set a highwayman on him: Set a woman on him: Try him with money."

One day when we were talking on the door step my father said, looking across the street: "What, can that really be ——?" (naming a mystic then sojourning in town.) "No," said I, "it is our neighbor Mr. B——." "Oh, well," said he, "I took him for ——, and thought he looked more like a gentleman and less like a philosopher than usual."

When Miss Fuller's book was published he wrote to a friend: "Margaret's book has had the most unlooked-for and welcome success. It is a small thing that you learned and virtuous people like it,

— I tell you the 'Post' and the 'Advertiser' praise it, and I expect a favorable leader from the 'Police Gazette.'"

Some of the extracts given concerning the reformers show that he saw well enough these absurdities, but he knew that, as every one else saw these, he could well afford to look for their virtues. Here are one or two observations on other classes however which may be amusing enough to introduce, though printed: "Here comes Elise, who caught cold in coming into the world and has always increased it since." Those persons "who can never understand a trope or second sense in your words, or any humor, but remain literalists after hearing the music and poetry and rhetoric and wit of seventy or eighty years. . . . They are past the help of surgeon or clergy. But even these can understand pitchforks or the cry of Fire! and I have noticed in some of this class a marked dislike of earthquakes." But he enjoyed wit at his own expense, and was much amused to hear that "the audience that assembled to hear my lectures [the course of 1856–7] in these last weeks was called the *effete* of Boston." He never failed to be completely overcome with laughter if any one recited the imitation of Brahma, beginning, —

> "If the gray tom-cat thinks he sings,
> Or if the song think it be sung,
> He little knows who boot-jacks flings
> How many bricks at him I 've flung."

Loud laughter, which he considered a sign of the worst breeding, he was never guilty of, and when he laughed he did so under protest, so to speak, and the effort while doing so to control the muscles of his face, over which he had imperfect command, made a strange struggle visible there. But the fun must be good or the satire keen : —

"Beware of cheap wit. How the whole vulgar human race every day from century to century plays at the stale game of each man calling the other a donkey."

Mr. Emerson had a good eye for form, and, that he would have drawn well with practice, the heads which he drew sometimes for his children's amusement showed. He had less eye for color, consequently delighted more in the work of Michael Angelo, Guercino, Salvator Rosa, and Raphael's cartoons, and especially in Greek sculpture, than in other works of art. He cared little for landscape painting. The symbolic, not the literal, charmed him. He seemed to have little value for the picturesque, rather objected to having it pointed out, and his own strange lines, —

> "Loved Nature like a hornèd cow,
> Bird or deer or caribou," —

nearly conveyed his own almost savage love, for it sometimes seemed as if the densest sprout-land, almost suffocating the walker with pollen or the

breath of sweet-fern on a hot summer afternoon, and thick with horseflies, was as agreeable to him as the glades and vistas that would charm an artist. And yet his eye sought and found beauty everywhere. Especially did it please him to find the "grace and glimmer of romance" which mist or moonlight or veiling water could give to humblest objects; —

> "Illusions like the tints of pearl
> Or changing colors of the sky;" —

or to see planetary motion in a schoolboy's play.

"I saw a boy on the Concord Common pick up an old bruised tin milk-pan that was rusting by the roadside and poising it on the top of a stick, set it a-turning and made it describe the most elegant imaginable curves." For he had what he called "musical eyes."

Journal. "I think sometimes that my lack of musical ear is made good to me through my eyes: that which others hear, I *see*. All the soothing, plaintive, brisk or romantic moods which corresponding melodies waken in them, I find in the carpet of the wood, in the margin of the pond, in the shade of the hemlock grove, or in the infinite variety and rapid dance of the tree-tops as I hurry along."

He had not, as he says, the musical ear, could not surely recognize the commonest airs, but was interested to hear good music occasionally.

"I think sometimes, could I only have music on my own terms, could I live in a city and know where I could go whenever I wished the ablution and inundation of musical waves, that were a bath and a medicine."

He liked to hear singing, preferring a woman's voice, but the sentiment of the song and the spirit with which it was rendered and the personal quality of the voice were more to him than the harmony.

His own voice in reading or speaking was agreeable, flexible and varied, with power unexpected from a man of his slender chest. His friend Mr. Alcott said of him "that some of his organs were free, some fated: the voice was entirely liberated, and his poems and essays were not rightly published until he read them."

Of his hardihood of mind and body he had good need on his long lecturing trips, as will presently be seen. The exposures seemed to do him no harm, and he usually returned in better health than when he set out, and yet he always suffered from cold, and learned on this account to make a rule to go to hotels rather than private houses, and I have often heard his first word on arriving to hotel clerk or waiter, — "Now make me red-hot." He had had his full share of sickness in youth, but from the age of thirty until his last

illness he only once or twice fell short of the best health, and though taken good care of at home, his own maxims and regimen, almost the same as Napoleon's, served him when abroad, namely, when health was threatened, to reverse the methods that had brought the attack. Warmth, water, wild air, and walking were his medicines.

February 7, 1839.

Journal. "The drunkard retires on a keg and locks himself up for a three days' debauch. When I am sick I please myself not less in retiring on a salamander stove, heaping the chamber with fuel and inundating lungs, liver, head and feet with floods of caloric, heats on heats. It is dainty to be sick, if you have leisure and convenience for it. One sees the colors of the carpet and the paper hangings. All the housemates have a softer, fainter look to the debilitated retina."

He had love and tenderness for very small children, and his skill in taking and handling a baby was in remarkable contrast to his awkwardness with animals or tools. The monthly nurse, who drew back instinctively when he offered to take a new-born baby from her arms, saw in another moment that she had no cause to shudder, for nothing could be more delicate and skilful and confident than his manner of holding the small scrap of humanity as delighted and smiling he bore it up

and down the room, making a charming and tender address to it. His little boy, the first-born of his family (two sons and two daughters), died at the age of five. His good friend Judge Hoar writes: "I think I was never more impressed with a human expression of agony than when Mr. Emerson led me into the room where little Waldo lay dead and said only, in reply to whatever I could say of sorrow or sympathy, "Oh, that boy! that boy!"

A very little child always had the entrance and the run of his study, where it was first carried around the room and shown the Flaxman statuette of Psyche with the butterfly wings, the little bronze Goethe, the copy of Michael Angelo's Fates which, because of the shears and thread, were always interesting. The pictures in the old "Penny Magazine" were the next treat, and then, if the child wanted to stay, pencil and letter-back were furnished him to draw with. After a time, if the visitor became too exacting, he was kindly dismissed, the fall being softened by some new scheme suggested. Entire sweetness and tact and firmness made resistance and expostulation out of the question.

If a child cried at table Mr. Emerson sent it out to see whether the gate had been left open or whether the clouds were coming up, so sure was he that the great calm face of Nature would soothe the little grief, or that her brilliant activity of

wind and sun would divert the childish mind. The small ambassador, a little perplexed as to why he was sent then, returned, solemnly reported and climbed back into his high chair.

My father seldom romped with the children, and any silliness or giggling brought a stern look; the retailing any gossip or ill-natured personal allusions heard outside was instantly nipped in the bud. No flippant mention of love, in even the childish romances of school, could be made, and the subject of death was also sacred from any light speech or jest.

The watchword which his Aunt Mary had given him and his brothers, "Always do what you are afraid to do," was prescribed to us and enforced as far as possible.

The annoyance which his own shyness and self-consciousness had cost him made him desire that young people should have whatever address and *aplomb* could be got by training, so he urged that they should dance and ride and engage in all out-of-door sports.

On in-door games he looked with a more jealous eye, remembering how he and his friends had amused themselves with good reading; only tolerated his children's acting in juvenile plays, and always disliked card-playing. On one occasion two of us had just learned some childish game of cards, and being dressed some time before breakfast, sat

down to play. When he entered he exclaimed, "No! No! No!. Put them away. Never affront the sacred morning with the sight of cards. When the day's work is done, or you are sick, then perhaps they will do, but never in the daylight! No!" Probably the traditions of his youth and his family's calling had something to do with the aversion always felt for cards, but his value of Nature and books as teachers made him grudge valuable time so spent.

He always expected that Sunday should be observed in the household, not with the old severity, but with due regard for a custom which he valued for itself as well as for association, and also for the feelings of others. We could read and walk and bathe in Walden, then secluded, but were not expected to have toys or to play games or romp or to go to drive or row. He was glad to have us go to church. His own attitude in the matter was, that it was only a question for each person where the best church was, — in the solitary wood, the chamber, the talk with the serious friend, or in hearing the preacher. This was shown when a young woman working in his household, in answer to his inquiry whether she had been to the church, said brusquely, "No, she did n't trouble the church much." He said quietly, "Then you have somewhere a little chapel of your own," a courteous assumption which perhaps set her thinking. He never

liked to attack the beliefs of others, but always held that lower beliefs needed no attacks, but were sure to give way by displacement when higher ones were given. One evening after a conversation where zealous radicals had explained that the death of Jesus had been simulated, not real, and planned beforehand by him and the disciples for its effect on the people, while he thereafter kept in hiding, my mother tells that she asked my father, "Should you like to have the children hear that?" He said, "No; it's odious to have lilies pulled up and skunk-cabbages planted in their places."

As our mother required us to learn a hymn on Sundays he would sometimes suggest one or two which he valued out of the rather unpromising church collection which we had,[1] or put in our hands Herrick's White Island or Litany to the Holy Spirit, Herbert's Elixir or Pulley, or part of Milton's Hymn of the Nativity.

He liked to read and recite to us poems or prose passages a little above our heads, and on Sunday mornings often brought into the dining-room something rather old for us, and read aloud from Southey's Chronicle of the Cid, or Froissart's Chronicles, or Burke's speeches, or amusing passages from Sydney Smith or Charles Lamb or Lowell. One

[1] Wesley's hymn was a favorite, beginning, —

"Thou hidden love of God! whose height,
Whose depth unfathomed, no man knows."

rainy Sunday when we could not go to walk we got permission from our mother to play Battledore and Shuttlecock for a little while, but no sooner did the sound of the shuttlecock on the parchment bat-head ring through the house than we heard the study door open and our father's stride in the entry. He came in and said: "That sound was never heard in New England before on Sunday and must not be in my house. Put them away."

November, 1839.

Journal. "The Sabbath is my best debt to the Past and binds me to some gratitude still. It brings me that frankincense out of a sacred antiquity."

On Sunday afternoons at four o'clock, when the children came from their Bible-reading in their mother's room he took them all to walk, more often towards Walden, or beyond to the Ledge ("My Garden"), the Cliffs, the old Baker Farm on Fairhaven, or Northward to Cæsar's Woods, Peter's Field, or to Copan (Oak Island) on the Great Meadows, or the old clearings, cellar-holes and wild-apple orchards of the Estabrook country, and sometimes across the South Branch of the river to the tract named Conantum by Mr. Channing from the Conants, its proprietors.

He showed us his favorite plants, usually rather humble flowers such as the Lespideza, —

"This flower of silken leaf
That once our childhood knew,"[1] —

or the little blue Self-heal[2] whose name recommended it. He led us to the vista in his woods beyond Walden that he found and improved with his hatchet;

"He smote the lake to please his eye
With the beryl beam of the broken wave;
He flung in pebbles, well to hear
The moment's music which they gave;"

and on the shores of frozen Walden on a dull winter's day halloed for Echo in which he took great delight, like Wordsworth's boy of Windermere. Echo, the booming of the ice on the pond or river, the wind in the pines and the Æolian harp in his west window were the sounds he best loved. At one time he had heard in the White Mountains a horn blown with so wonderful reply of Echo that he often recalled it with joy and went thither in his later years, but the Echo was gone, the building of some barn had so affected the conditions.

Often as he walked he would recite fragments of ballads, old or modern; Svend Vonved, Battle of Harlaw, Scott's Dinas Emlinn, Alice Brand,

[1] THE DIRGE.

[2] "All over the wide fields of earth grows the prunella or Self-heal. After every foolish day we sleep off the fumes and furies of its hours," etc. — NATURE, in Essays, 2d Series.

and Childe Dyring, Wordsworth's Boy of Egremond, Byron's lines about Murat's Charge, and occasionally would try upon us lines of poems that he was composing, "The Boston Hymn," or the Romany Girl, "crooning" them to bring out their best melody.

He took the greatest interest in our recitation of poetry, and pleased himself that no one of us could sing, for he said he thought that he had observed that the two gifts of singing and oratory did not go together. Good declamation he highly prized, and used to imitate for us the recitation of certain demigods of the college in those days when all the undergraduates went with interest to hear the Seniors declaim.

On our return from school after "Speaking Afternoon" he always asked, "Did you do well?" "I don't know." "Did the boys study or play, or did they sit still and look at you?" "Several of them did n't attend." "But you must *oblige* them to. If the orator does n't command his audience they will command him."

He cared much that we should do well in Latin and in Greek, liked to read our Virgil with us, and even *Viri Romæ*, and on days when I had stayed at home from school and congratulated myself that tasks were dodged, sent me to the study for "The thick little book on the fourth shelf," and spent an hour with me over *Erasmi Colloquia*. But with

our dislike of mathematics he sympathized, said we came by it honestly, and would have let us drop the subject all too soon, but for the requirements of school and college curriculum. He was uneasy at seeing the multitude of books for young people that had begun to appear which prevented our reading the standard authors as children, as he and his brothers had done. He required his son to read two pages of Plutarch's Lives every schoolday and ten pages on Saturdays and in vacation.

The modern languages he was careless about, for he said one could easily pick up French and German for himself.

He had the grace to leave to his children, after they began to grow up, the responsibility of deciding in more important questions concerning themselves, for which they cannot be too grateful to him; he did not command or forbid, but laid the principles and the facts before us and left the case in our hands.

Nothing could be better than his manner to children and young people, affectionate and with a marked respect for their personality, as if perhaps their inspiration or ideal might be better than his own, yet dignified and elevating by his expectations. He was at ease with them and questioned them kindly, but as if expecting from them something better than had yet appeared, so that he always inspired affection and awe, but never fear. The

beauty, the sincerity, the hopefulness of young people charmed him. Hearing from Mrs. Lowell the generous discontent of her son Charles with the conditions of society, he wrote to her, "I hope he will never get over it." The son did not, and this ferment made his short and brilliant life, ended on the battle-field of Cedar Creek, one continuous and intelligent endeavor to help on the world.

In a letter to a friend in 1837, Mr. Emerson had said what were the duties of the thinker and scholar: "Sit apart, write; let them hear or let them forbear; the written word abides, until slowly and unexpectedly and in widely sundered places it has created its own church." The young were his audience and the whole history of his middle and later life was the justification of this course. Not only did the best young spirits of Cambridge find that the Turnpike road led to a door, only thirteen miles away, always open to any earnest questioner, but from remote inland colleges, from workshops in cities of the distant States, from the Old World, and last even from India and the islands of the Pacific Ocean, came letters of anxious and trusting young people seeking help for their spiritual condition. And these letters were answered and often, years afterward, the writer himself came. Mr. Emerson's excuse to the Abolition Reformers for not giving himself wholly up to their cause, — that

he had his own imprisoned spirits to free, — was justified, for the burden of these letters is in almost every case, "Your book found us in darkness and bonds; it broke the chain; we are thankful and must say it. You will still help us."

The story of his awakening and liberating influence has been publicly told by several of the young men who found in him a helper. Matthew Arnold said: —

"There came to us in that old Oxford time a voice also from this side of the Atlantic, a clear and pure voice, which for my ear . . . brought a strain as new and moving and unforgetable as the strain of Newman or Carlyle or Goethe."

But when the young visitor asked of God or of Heaven as he would about the President or the market, and clumsily handled the great mysteries of Life and Death as if they were by-laws of a club, he received never a direct answer,[1] but one

[1] Compare the following passages from journals between 1840 and 1850: —

"Everything in the Universe goes by indirection. There are no straight lines."

"If we could speak the direct solving words it would solve us too."

"The gods like indirect names and dislike to be named directly."

"In good society, say among the angels in heaven, is not everything spoken by indirection and nothing quite straight as it befell?"

that threw a side light on the question, showed its awful and vast proportions, set him thinking about it for himself with a new feeling of what he was dealing with.

Mr. Emerson was, as Arnold said, the friend of those who would live in the Spirit, but he only wished to free them, not to throw his newer chains on them.

In his journal (1856) he writes cheerfully: "I have been writing and speaking what were once called novelties for twenty-five or thirty years and have not now one disciple." The would-be disciples must go, he held, to the fountain which he had pointed out, for themselves, and might well get a deeper insight than he. "I make no allowance for youth in talking with my friends. If a youth or maiden converses with me I forget they are not as old as I am."

Mr. Bradford relates that once while he and my father were travelling in the White Mountains they met a city friend at a hotel. This gentleman and Mr. Emerson were talking in some public part of the hotel on books and men, when a green youth, probably a student, who sat by, became interested and tried to join in the conversation, putting questions to them. At length he broke in with, "Well, what do you think of Romulus?" This not seeming a promising theme, this gentleman said in French to Mr. Emerson, "Let us talk in French,"

but the latter entirely refused to notice so rude a proposal.

On lecturing, Mr. Emerson mainly depended for his livelihood, for his books brought him little until the last years of his life. But for the building of the Fitchburg Railroad, Concord would soon have become an impossible place of residence for one whose field for work had become greatly enlarged by the rapid spinning of the net-work of iron rails over the continent. From courses in the near New England cities and such villages as could be reached in a few hours in a chaise, year by year the programme became more extensive and complicated, and from 1850 for twenty years each winter meant for him at least two months of arduous travel from Maine to the new States beyond the Mississippi, speaking almost every night, except Sundays, during that time. Travelling now in the close and dirty cars of those days, now making a connection by a forty mile drive in an open sleigh on the bleak prairie, or, in a thaw, on wheels sunk to the hubs in glutinous mud, now in a crowded canal boat, sometimes staying at wretched taverns, or worse, in the deadly cold spare bedroom of a private house, now in fine hotels, sometimes dragging his trunk through the suffocating corridors of a burning inn, sometimes crossing the Mississippi in an open boat, partly on ice, partly in water, — he

went cheerfully and found much to admire and to enjoy, ignoring all discomforts or making the best of them. In the journals, always taken up with thoughts, recording seldom an incident, one rarely finds allusion to the experiences of his yearly winter campaign. Here are a few glimpses of this part of his life: —

"1851.

"You write a discourse and for the next weeks and months are carted about the country at the tail of that discourse simply to read it over and over."

On the last day of the year 1855 he writes: —

"I have crossed the Mississippi on foot three times" between the Iowa and Illinois shores, remembering, no doubt, as he slid along the line in which he delighted in the old Danish ballad, Svend Vonved, —

"Ice is of bridges the bridge most broad."

At the Le Claire House in Davenport he noted for his guidance the posted rules of the house: "No gentleman permitted to sit at the table without his coat. No gambling permitted in the house," and heard his stalwart table-companions between their talk of land-sales call for "a quarter-section of that pie." At Rock Island he finds himself advertised as "The Celebrated Metaphysician," at Davenport as "The Essayist and Poet."

Though once he said that in hotels "the air is

buttered — the whole air a volatilized beef-steak," he usually rather praises than finds fault, for as early as 1843 he wrote: "An American is served like a noble in these city hotels, and his individuality as much respected; and he may go imperially along all the highways of iron and water. I like it very well that in the heart of democracy I find such practical illustration of high theories."

"I am greatly pleased with the merchants. In railway cars and hotels it is common to meet only the successful class, and so we have favorable specimens, but these discover more manly power of all kinds than scholars; behave a great deal better, converse better, and have independent and sufficient manners."

He was still at school, and again writes: —

"Travelling is a very humiliating experience to me. I never go to any church like a railroad car for teaching me my deficiencies."

In Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, and on the trains he found John W. Brooks, Reuben N. Rice, the Hurds, Hosmers, Warrens, and other young men from Concord or its neighborhood, and year by year the enterprising young people of the growing West met him, helped him in every way they could, and gave him real pleasure by showing not only the great material prosperity of the country, but that intellectual and spiritual interests also grew.

In January, 1867, Mr. Emerson wrote from Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, to his ever-helpful friend, Mr. Wiley, of Chicago: "Such a citizen of the world as you are should look once at these northern towns, which I have seen under the perhaps too smiling face of the mildest, best winter weather, which may be exceptional, though the people almost to a man extol their climate. Minneapolis would strongly attract me if I were a young man, — more than St. Paul, — and this town [Fond du Lac] is a wonderful growth, and shines like a dream seen this morn from the top of Amory Hall."

On these journeys he always had one or two books in his satchel, often Latin or French.

"One should dignify and entertain and signalize each journey or adventure by carrying to it a literary masterpiece and making acquaintance with it on the way, — Dante's Vita Nuova, Horace, Æschylus, Goethe, Beaumarchais."

When his eyes tired, the level prairie landscape, made even more monotonous by its mantle of snow, though here and there it was varied by a grove or timbered river-bottom, gave such relief as it could. Here is the rolling panorama rendered into a prose-poem: —

"The engineer was goading his boilers with pine knots. The traveller looked out of the car window; the fences passed languidly by; he could scan curiously every post. But very soon the jerk

of every pulse of the engine was felt; the whistle of the engineer moaned short moans as it swept across the highway. He gazed out over the fields; the fences were tormented, every rail and rider twisted past the window; the snow-banks swam past like fishes; the near trees and bushes wove themselves into colored ribbons; the rocks, walls, the fields themselves, streaming like a mill-tail. The train tore on with jumps and jerks that tested the strength of oak and iron. The passengers seemed to suffer their speed. Meantime the wind cried like a child, complained like a saw-mill, whistled like a fife, mowed like an idiot, roared like the sea, and at last yelled like a demon."

While speaking of the lecturer, there is a story told me by one of my father's friends in a neighboring town that gives a pleasant picture.

Mr. Willard, of Harvard, Mass., the village where William Emerson first preached, said that when my father came to lecture there many years ago the Curator of the Lyceum rose in the desk and said: "I have the pleasure as well as the honor of introducing to you this evening the Reverend" — "Oh, we can do without the 'Reverend,' Mr. ——," said Mr. Emerson, looking up from his papers, loud enough to be heard by many of the audience, who were much amused. He used to say, "Never mind about the amount of compensation, I will always come here, for this is my father's town."

In the month of December, 1866, I, returning from six months on a Western railroad, met my father in New York just setting out for his winter's journey to the West, and we spent the night together at the St. Denis Hotel. He read me some poems that he was soon to publish in his new volume, May Day, and among them Terminus. I was startled, for he, looking so healthy, so full of life and young in spirit, was reading his deliberate acknowledgment of failing forces and his trusting and serene acquiescence. I think he smiled as he read. That year Harvard, which had closed her gates to him after his Divinity School Address, again, after nearly a generation had passed, opened them wide to him, for a new spirit had come upon her. He was made Doctor of Laws and Overseer; in 1867, asked to give the Phi Beta Kappa address once more, and in 1869 was invited by the College to give a course of lectures on Philosophy to the students.

This invitation gave him pleasure, but came too late. He had said to a friend, "I never was a metaphysician, but I have observed the operations of my faculties for a long time and noted them, and no metaphysician can afford to do without what I have to say." These notes he now endeavored to bring into form. He called this course the Natural History of the Intellect, but his strength was beginning to fail, the ordering of his

ideas, always to him the difficult part of his work, was especially important in such lectures, and the stress of preparing two new lectures a week for six weeks was too much for his strength. His necessities obliged him still to work hard, giving lectures and readings in the winter and composing during the summer. It was always difficult to make him take a vacation. Mere amusement he could not take. When he could not write, then he read or went to his woods, but reading or walking were alike seeding for his crops.

During the decade between 1860 and 1870 he took great pleasure in meeting once a month at dinner in Boston the members of the Saturday[1] Club, Agassiz, Lowell, Holmes, Longfellow, Norton, Hawthorne, Judge Hoar, Governor Andrew, Senator Sumner, Elliot Cabot, John M. Forbes, and other friends.

He continued his usual work, but in a less degree, during 1870 and 1871 going less far to the westward in winter, the College course however giving him most anxiety and fatigue. In the spring of 1871 Mr. John M. Forbes, a valued friend through many years, saw how Mr. Emerson's work was telling on him, and that he would not take the needed rest, and insisted on carrying him off as his guest on a vacation trip to California under the pleasantest conditions. His friend Mr. James B.

[1] Sometimes spoken of as the Atlantic Club, but not the same.

Thayer, who afterward wrote an account of this journey, Mr. Emerson's daughter Edith, her husband, Colonel William H. Forbes, and other friends, were of the party. The excursion greatly refreshed him and very probably prolonged his life. The next winter, though he had not meant to go to the West again, Mr. Emerson would not refuse the appeal of burnt Chicago, and for her sake gave up his Thanksgiving festival at home, at which all the clan gathered yearly about his board.

The failure of his strength, and especially his memory, showed in the lectures given in Boston in the winter of 1871–2, but had hardly been generally perceived until after the sickness following the exposure, excitement and fatigue undergone on the morning of July, 1872, when he and his wife awoke to escape, imperfectly clad, from their house in flames, into the rain, and then had worked beyond their strength with their zealous and helpful neighbors in saving their effects.

His good friends sent him abroad with his daughter Ellen for his rest and pleasure while his house was being rebuilt by their kindness. Mr. William Ralph Emerson, his kinsman, generously gave plans and advice for the restoration of the house, and Mr. John S. Keyes offered to superintend the work, giving much time and care to it, and through these acts of thoughtful kindness Mr. Emerson was set free to travel and recruit his powers. Before he

went, while many doors were thrown wide open to him and his family, he chose the Manse, the Concord home of his youth and boyhood, where his cousin, Miss Ripley, affectionately received them. A semblance of a study was fitted up for him in the Court House, but he could not work, — only search for and endeavor to sort his manuscripts. He wrote to his friend Dr. Furness: —

"*August* 11, 1872.

. . . "It is too ridiculous that a fire should make an old scholar sick: but the exposures of that morning and the necessities of the following days which kept me a large part of the time in the blaze of the sun have in every way demoralized me for the present, — incapable of any sane or just action." [He tells that the portrait of his daughter Edith, painted by young William Furness, was saved from fire, and then, after apologizing for various forgetfulnesses in acknowledging letters he ends: —] "These signal proofs of my debility and decay ought to persuade you at your first northern excursion to come and reanimate and renew the failing powers of your still affectionate old Friend,

"R. W. EMERSON."

Mr. Emerson sailed for England in the autumn of 1872, made a short stay in London and Paris, Florence and Rome, too much broken to take much

pleasure, but felt a real desire to go up the ancient Nile, and found better health and some enjoyment in this winter trip as far as Philæ, as he said he should be unwilling to go home after having come so far, really attracted to Egypt by a wish to see the grave of "him who lies buried at Philæ." [1]

He was so far improved in health that he was willing to spend the spring in England and go about among people, and he everywhere met with great courtesy and kindness. He saw once more his friend Carlyle, then feeble and sad, and other friends old and new, but he was in even greater haste to return home than in 1834, and gladly landed in Boston in May.

When the train reached Concord, the bells were rung and a great company of his neighbors and friends accompanied him, under a triumphal arch, to his restored house. He was greatly moved, but with characteristic modesty insisted that this was a welcome to his daughter and could not be meant for him. Although he had felt quite unable to make any speech, yet seeing his friendly townspeople, old and young in groups watching him enter his own door once more, he turned suddenly back and going to the gate said: "My friends! I know that this is not a tribute to an old man and his daughter returned to their house, but to the common blood of us all — one family — in Concord!"

[1] Isis here deposited the remains of Osiris.

The feverish attack following the burning of his house, which he alluded to in his letter to Dr. Furness, seemed to him an admonition to put his affairs in order before he should die. He therefore, during a journey taken that summer with his daughter Ellen to Waterford, Maine, thought and talked much to this purpose, and his directions were written down. The question daily recurring, who should be his literary executor, troubled him, and though Mr. Cabot was constantly in his thought, the favor seemed to him all too great to ask of him. His family resolved that they must ask this great gift for him from his friend. When told that a most generous and cordial consent had been given, his heart was set entirely at rest.

Mr. Emerson, after his return from Europe, applied himself diligently day after day to correcting and revising the proofs laid down at the time of the fire, but soon, though something was accomplished, it became sadly evident that he needed skilled assistance to complete the work. Meantime the English and American publishers pressed him for the book, long due, from which only his broken health had obtained for him a reprieve. It was natural for the family in this emergency to turn to Mr. Cabot. They proposed to him to begin his task during my father's lifetime and put this book in order. He came, and the tangled skein smoothed itself under his hand, and Mr. Emerson, when the

work was laid before him with the weak points marked, was able to write the needed sentence or recast the defective one, so that after a few visits from Mr. Cabot the book, which had long presented insuperable difficulties, had taken definite shape, and was ready in season for the publishers. And not only was this done and the long anxiety about the literary executorship dispelled, but to have this friend, whom he had never seen so much of as he desired, thus brought often to his house and drawn nearer was an inexhaustible pleasure. He always spoke of Letters and Social Aims to Mr. Cabot as "your book." Nothing could exceed the industry and skill brought to the task, nor the delicacy and kindness shown throughout, and the peace of mind thus procured made Mr. Emerson's last days happy. He allowed his children to ask Mr. Cabot to write his biography in the future, and when, with great hesitation and modesty, a consent was given, was well content. He felt towards Mr. Cabot as to a younger brother.

In 1875 Mr. Emerson was nominated by the Independents among the students of the University of Glasgow for the office of Lord Rector for that year, and received five hundred votes, Lord Beaconsfield, the successful candidate, having seven hundred. It was fortunate that Mr. Emerson failed of election, for the duty of the Lord Rector was to deliver the annual address to the students,

and for this task and the two voyages he was no longer fit.

Soon after, he was notified of his election as associate member of the French Academy. In 1876 he received his first call from the South, and not liking to say nay, went thither accompanied by his daughter and read an address (of course written some time before) to the Literary Societies of the University of Virginia. The paper was a characteristic pæan over the happiness of the scholar, who, he always said, "had drawn the white lot in life." The war was too recent for this occasion to be entirely a pleasant one.

His last few years were quiet and happy. Nature gently drew the veil over his eyes; he went to his study and tried to work, accomplished less and less, but did not notice it. However he made out to look over and index most of his journals. He enjoyed reading, but found so much difficulty in conversation in associating the right word with his idea, that he avoided going into company, and on that account gradually ceased to attend the meetings of the Social Circle. As his critical sense became dulled, his standard of intellectual performance was less exacting, and this was most fortunate, for he gladly went to any public occasion where he could hear, and nothing would be expected of him. He attended the Lyceum and all occasions of speaking or reading in the Town Hall with unfailing pleasure.

He read a lecture before his townspeople each winter as late as 1880, but needed to have one of his family near by to help him out with a word and assist in keeping the place in his manuscript. In these last years he liked to go to church. The instinct had been always there, but he had felt that he could use his time to better purpose.

Friendly letters came by every mail, and some very astonishing ones; visitors often came, and were kindly received by him. His books, which, during the first ten or fifteen years after they began to appear, the publishers had called "very poor-paying stock," now found a ready sale and were widely distributed and known, and were translated into other languages.

I read last year in the "Century Magazine" a sad story of a young Russian who, in despair, had lately ended his life by his own act, in far Siberia, and who was first imprisoned, as a student, for having in his possession a borrowed copy of the essay on Self-Reliance.

In a letter to my father in 1854 Horatio Greenough, the sculptor, wrote: "I found your Representative Men in the hands of a *dame du palais* in Vienna in 1848, and have learned that she has been exiled, having made herself politically obnoxious."

In 1857, after a happy walk with Thoreau, Mr. Emerson recounted in his journal the treas-

ures that this high-steward of Nature had shown him, and went on: —

"But I was taken with the aspects of the forest, and thought that to Nero advertising for a new pleasure, a walk in the woods should have been offered. 'T is one of the secrets for dodging old age."

TO THE WOODS.

"Whoso goeth in your paths readeth the same cheerful lesson, whether he be a young child or a hundred years old. Comes he in good fortune or in bad, ye say the same things, and from age to age. Ever the needles of the pine grow and fall, the acorns on the oak; the maples redden in autumn, and at all times of the year the ground-pine and the pyrola bud and root under foot. What is called fortune and what is called time by men, ye know them not. Men have not language to describe one moment of your life. When you shall give me somewhat to say, give me also the tune wherein to say it. Give me a tune like your winds or brooks or birds, for the songs of men grow old, when they are repeated; but yours, though a man have heard them for seventy years, are never the same, but always new, like Time itself, or like love."

He could see his woods from the car window, and said, "when I pass them on the way to the city, how they reproach me!"

When Old Age came he found him still walking in the woods and that the spirit was proof against his attacks, though he might injure the organs and frame. My father walked to the last, and liked to go to the woods, but could not walk so far as in earlier days, and Walden woods were so sadly changed by publicity from the green temples that first he knew, that he had little pleasure in going to them.

All through life he was cheerful by temperament and on principle, and in his last days he was very happy. He took great pleasure in his home. He loved his country, his town, his wife, his family, and constantly rejoiced in the happiness of his lot.

In April, 1882, a raw and backward spring, he caught cold and increased it by walking out in the rain and, through forgetfulness, omitting to put on his overcoat. He had a hoarse cold for a few days, and on the evening of April nineteenth I found him a little feverish, so went to see him next day. He was asleep on his study sofa, and when he woke he proved to be more feverish and a little bewildered, with unusual difficulty in finding the right word. He was entirely comfortable and enjoyed talking, and as he liked to have me read to him, I read Paul Revere's Ride, finding that he could only follow simple narrative. He expressed great pleasure, was delighted that the story was part of Concord's story, but was sure he had never heard

it before, and could hardly be made to understand who Longfellow was, though he had attended his funeral only the week before. Yet, though dulled to other impressions, to one he was fresh as long as he could understand anything, and while even the familiar objects of his study began to look strange he smiled and pointed to Carlyle's head and said, "That is my man, my good man!" I mention this because it has been said that this friendship cooled and that my father had for long years neglected to write to his early friend. He was loyal while life lasted, but had been unable to write a letter for years before he died. Their friendship did not need letters.

The next day pneumonia developed itself in a portion of one lung and he seemed much sicker; evidently believed he was to die, and with difficulty made out to give a word or two of instructions to his children. He did not know how to be sick and desired to be dressed and sit in his study, and as we had found that any attempt to regulate his actions lately was very annoying to him, and he could not be made to understand the reasons for our doing so in his condition, I determined that it would not be worth while to trouble and restrain him as it would a younger person who had more to live for. He had lived free: his life was essentially spent, and in what must almost surely be his last illness we would not embitter the occasion by any restraint that was not absolutely unavoidable.

He suffered very little, took his nourishment well, but had great annoyance from his inability to find the words which he wished for. He knew his friends and family, but thought that he was in a strange house. He sat up in a chair by the fire much of the time, and only on the last day stayed entirely in bed. Dr. Charles P. Putnam advised with me about his treatment.

During the sickness he always showed pleasure when his wife sat by his side, and on one of the last days he managed to express, in spite of his difficulty with words, how long and happily they had lived together. The sight of his grandchildren always brought the brightest smile to his face. On the last day he saw several of his friends and took leave of them. When it was told him that Mr. Cabot had come, his face lighted up, and he exclaimed, "Elliot Cabot? Praise!"

Only at the last came pain, and this was at once relieved by ether, and in the quiet sleep thus produced he gradually faded away in the evening of Thursday the twenty-seventh day of April, 1882. His death was from weakness, not from the extent of the disease in the lung.

Thirty-five years earlier he wrote in his journal (October 21, 1837): "I said when I awoke, After some more sleepings and wakings I shall lie on this mattress sick; then dead; and through my gay entry they will carry these bones. Where

shall I be then? I lifted my head and beheld the spotless orange light of the morning beaming up from the dark hills into the wide universe."

On Sunday, the thirtieth of April, his body was laid first by the altar in the old church while the farewell words were spoken in the presence of a great assembly of friends and townsmen and many who had come from afar to do him reverence, then under the pine-tree which he had chosen on the hill above Sleepy Hollow by the graves of his mother and child; even as he had written, when a youth in Newton, "Here sit Mother and I under the pine-tree, still almost as we shall lie by and by under them."

There remain a few points, which, though touched on in the foregoing sketch, could not there, without too great interruption of the narrative, be so fully stated as seems to me desirable. I have therefore reserved them for mention here, unwilling to let pass this opportunity to say what I think to be the truth regarding my father's characteristic opinions and actions where they have been called in question.

Much has been said in print of Mr. Emerson's "shrewdness," and those who delight in classic

contrasts, like those made by Plutarch between his heroes, have pleased themselves by heightening the effect of Carlyle's ill-health, incapacity for looking after his own interests and consequent poverty, by allusion to the health and prosperity of his friend with his "Yankee" traits. Certainly the men were very unlike, — so much so that it is most fortunate that that enduring friendship was never put to the severe test of Carlyle's coming to dwell in Concord, as Mr. Emerson long hoped he would, — but the comparisons that have often been made do not tell the story rightly.

As for health, Mr. Emerson's early letters show that for ten years, from the time he taught school in Boston until his first voyage to Europe in 1833, he struggled hard against disease, to which both of his younger brothers succumbed, and won his way through to the good health of his active life as writer and lecturer by sacrifice, prudence, and more than all by good hope; sometimes hope against hope.

As for shrewdness, and prosperity, he began life burdened with responsibilities and with debts from which by hard work and the closest economy he had just freed himself, when trouble threatening lungs and hip obliged him to decline good opportunities of settling himself over a parish, and accept the kindly help of his kinsman to enable him to go into long banishment for his health's sake in

the South. The property that came to him later gave him respite and helped save his life, but was impaired by various claims that he willingly recognized and responsibilities which he assumed to his kin by blood and marriage, and also by sympathy of ideas, — he always had "*his* poor," of whom few or none else took heed, — so that he soon came under the necessity of strict economy and constant arduous work to keep free from debt.

The whole tale of the shrewdness has been told when it has been said that he was usually right in his instincts of the character of the persons with whom he dealt (though often he imputed more virtue than was rightly there), and that he avoided being harnessed into enterprises not rightly his, lived simply, served himself and went without things which he could not afford, only however to give freely for what public or private end seemed desirable or commanding on another and better day. These simple rules were his utmost skill. He had no business faculty or even ordinary skill in figures; could only with the greatest difficulty be made to understand an account, and his dealings with the American publishers on behalf of Mr. Carlyle, adduced in proof of his Yankee "faculty," really only shows what love and loyalty he bore his friend, that he would freely undertake for him duties so uncongenial and, — but for outside help and expert counsel, — almost impossible for him.

For many years he made his own arrangements for lectures, undertaking courses in Boston at his own risk and giving lectures in the courses of Lyceums which applied to him in the East and the West, arranging the terms by correspondence with the committees, usually accepting those they offered, — small compensation even in cities, and in the country towns almost nominal. Often he gave his lectures without compensation to little towns in the neighborhood with small means, for he had a great tenderness for the country Lyceum as the best gift a village had for its thoughtful persons, especially the youth. Later the remuneration was better, liberal in the large cities, and these, especially in the West, made arrangements with many towns in the neighborhood each to engage a lecture, and this custom soon gave rise to Lyceum Bureau system.

Happily he had always friends ready with wise counsel or, if need were, with helping hand, to bridge over any difficulty. Their counsel he gladly used, but always shrank from pecuniary aid that could not be repaid, though on two occasions in his latter years he brought himself to allow so much for friendship's sake.

His friend and parishioner, Mr. Abel Adams, a Boston merchant of most simple and sterling character, earlier mentioned in this narrative, was for many years his business adviser. The failure of some Vermont railroads in which Mr. Adams had

himself put much money, and advised them as an investment to my father, so troubled this good man that he insisted on assuming charge of the expense of Mr. Emerson's son while in Harvard College during the hard times due to the war. It was only from so dear and old a friend, and after considering the proposition for some time, that my father was willing to accept this gift.

Mr. Emerson's contracts with his publishers were made by himself, and, as a result, not greatly to his advantage, so that the sums received from his books, though the sales constantly increased, were small.

A trusted agent who quarterly gave what seemed to my father "masterly and clear-headed statements of account" of his real estate, but very little money, after years of fraud, had the property barely saved from his grasp before he defaulted, by Mr. Emerson's son-in-law. Mr. Forbes then asked my father's leave to take charge also of his business arrangements about his books, and very soon the returns from the sale of these were doubled, partly owing to the increasing demand, but more to the good oversight and management. The shrewd Mr. Emerson was astonished and almost troubled at his champion's audacity, and felt almost ashamed to receive his dues.[1] But for this

[1] It is due to the memory of Mr. James T. Fields, at one time Mr. Emerson's publisher, to say that he was always a friend and did him all kinds of substantial service.

timely aid Mr. Emerson, in the last years of his life, would have been vexed with serious anxieties about money matters when he could no longer earn.

The noble gift which his friends forced upon him, to rebuild his house and send him abroad, extended farther, and helped to make his last years comfortable.

Many persons who held Mr. Emerson in high regard felt that he was the dupe of the Reformers, the strange beings that filled the roads in those days and have been so wittily described by Hawthorne and others, —

"Dreamers of dreams, born out of their due time."

Of these poor souls Mr. Emerson was very tender. The parish poor and the African had their friends and defenders, but these were his poor.

1841.

Journal. "Rich say you? Are you rich? how rich? rich enough to help anybody? rich enough to succor the friendless, the unfashionable, the eccentric? rich enough to make the Canadian in his wagon, the travelling beggar with his written paper which recommends him to the charitable, the Italian foreigner with his few broken words of English, the ugly lame pauper hunted by overseers

from town to town, even the poor insane or half-insane wreck of man or woman, feel the noble exception of your presence and your house from the general bleakness and stoniness; to make such feel that they were greeted with a voice that made them both remember and hope? What is vulgar but to refuse the claim? What is gentle but to allow it?"[1]

That he saw through the reformers, and that no one was more aware of their shortcomings than he, the extracts that I shall give will show; but he believed that every man should be taken by his best handle, so to speak, if you would raise him or get the good of him. Here are the outcries that would come when he came back to his study after wearying talks with these "monotones," as he called them: —

1842.

Journal. "Could they not die? or succeed? or help themselves? or draw others? or draw me? or offend me? in any manner, I care not how, could they not be disposed of, and cease to hang there in the horizon an unsettled appearance, too great to be neglected, and not great enough to be of any aid or comfort to this great craving humanity.

[1] This passage and that on page 210, though printed in the essay on MANNERS, so truly describe their author's action that it seemed best to introduce them.

Oh, if they could take a second step, and a third! The reformer is so confident, that all are erect while he puts his finger on your special abuse and tells you your great want in America. I tell him, yea, but not in America only, but in the universe ever since it was known, just this defect has appeared. But when he has anatomized the evil, he will be called out of the room, or have got something else in his head. Remedied it will never be."

"But C. L. gives a good account of his conversation with B——, who would drive him to an argument. He took his pencil and paper out of his pocket and asked B—— to give him the names of the profoundest men in America. B—— stopped and gave him one, and then another, and then his own for third. B—— never will stop and listen, neither in conversation, but what is more, not in solitude."

July 8, 1843.

Journal. "The sun and the evening sky do not look calmer than Alcott and his family at Fruitlands. They seemed to have arrived at the fact, to have got rid of the show, and so to be serene. Their manners and behavior in the house and in the field were those of superior men, — of men at rest. What had they to conceal? what had they to exhibit? and it seemed so high an attainment that I thought, as often before, so now more because they

had a fit home, or the picture was fitly framed, that these men ought to be maintained in their place by the country for its culture. Young men and young maidens, old men and women should visit them and be inspired. I think there is as much merit in beautiful manners as in hard work. I will not prejudge them successful. They look well in July. We will see them in December. I know they are better for themselves, than as partners. One can easily see that they have yet to settle several things. Their saying that things are clear and they sane, does not make them so. If they will in very deed be lovers and not selfish; if they will serve the town of Harvard, and make their neighbors feel them as benefactors, wherever they touch them, they are as safe as the sun."

1842.

Journal. "A man cannot force himself by any self-denying ordinances, neither by water nor potatoes, nor by violent passivities, by refusing to swear, refusing to pay taxes, by going to jail, or by taking another man's crop. . . . By none of these ways can he free himself, no, nor by paying his debts with money; only by obedience to his own genius, only by the freest activity in the way constitutional to him, does an angel seem to arise and lead him by the hand out of all wards of the prison."

1841.

Journal. "I weary of dealing with people each cased in his several insanity. Here is a fine person with wonderful gifts, but mad as the rest and madder, and, by reason of his great genius, which he can use as weapon too, harder to deal with. I would gladly stand to him in relation of a benefactor, as screen and defence to me, thereby having him at some advantage and on my own terms, that so his frenzy may not annoy me. I know well that this wish is not great, but small; is mere apology for not treating him frankly and manlike; but I am not large man enough to treat him firmly and unsympathetically as a patient, and if treated equally and sympathetically as sane, his disease makes him the worst of bores."

A modern novel-writer subdivides the Saints into the simple saints and the knowing ones, and there is no doubt Mr. Emerson belonged to the latter class.

Here is a parable:—

"You ask, O Theanor, said Amphitryon, that I should go forth from this palace with my wife and children, and that you and your family may enter and possess it. The same request in substance has been often made to me before by numbers of persons. Now I also think that I and my wife ought to go forth from the house and work

all day in the fields and lie at night under some thicket, but I am waiting where I am, only until some god shall point out to me which among all these applicants, yourself or some other, is the rightful claimant."

Journal. "In reference to the philanthropies of the day it seems better to use than to flout them. Shall it be said of the hero that he opposed all the contemporary good because it was not grand? I think it better to get their humble good and to catch the golden boon of purity and temperance and mercy from these poor [preachers and reformers]."

To the most advanced souls of that day abstract speculations had quite sunk out of sight and memory mundane duties of themselves or those whom they would enlist or enlighten, and it is easy to see that their entertainer might well find it hard to have lecture or book ready on a certain day. These men of Olympian leisure, who might well have inspired the poem "The Visit," rose only refreshed from their morning's talk. It is told that at one house visited by such prophets, the little girl, sent to reconnoitre, returned crying out in despair, "Mamma! they 've begun again!"

It is but fair to tell, as an illustration of the law of compensation, that an astounding recoil followed

in the minds and practice of many of those strange visitors who sat around the table, "*chacun souriant à sa chimère*," roundly denouncing, by implication, their entertainers, and sometimes starting bolt upright and answering to their hostess's hospitable offers of service, "Tea! I?" or, "Butter! I?" or condemning the institutions of the family or of domestic service to which they at the moment owed their comfort. The most notable example was that of one of those apostles who had come to Mr. Emerson to show him that all use of money was wicked, and a few years later wrote him a simple and confident letter, telling of his engagement to a lady, — the counterpart of himself, — and that, as she was not strong and he did not wish her to work, he asked Mr. Emerson to "send them a competence" to be married on. Later one who desired a better education and was sure of Mr. Emerson's interest in the plan, wrote for the money "by the last part of this week or fore part of next."

The felicitous combination, from an economical point of view, of the diverse tastes of the pair celebrated in Mother Goose may have suggested this thought to the entertainers of the saints.: —

"What a pity that the insanities of our insane are not complementary, so that we could house two of them together."

Among these men-of-one-idea he mentions one, perhaps less tedious than the others because of the

novelty of his mania, who explained to the company in the coach "all the way from Middleborough, his contrivances for defending his own coffin in his grave from body-snatchers. He had contrived a pistol to go off, pop! from this end, and a pistol, pop! from that end, and he was plainly spending his life in the sweets of the revenge he was going to take after death on the young doctors that should creep to his graveyard."

Another reformer who came to New England from over seas, and while visiting Mr. Emerson was a very Rhadamanthus in his strictures on the social fabric of the times, became later a broker. But amidst these lapses one shining exception must be chronicled. There was a certain wandering prophet of those days, careless and sceptical of aught else, but who believed in the Sun. This saint would have gone attired in a sheet only, a garment readily unfolded or completely shed when he would receive benign influences shot down to him from the Sun-god, but that the mistress of the house, in the Community which he would have joined and converted, told him with decision that he must wear proper clothes or depart promptly. Under these restrictions he pined, soon took the road, and, I am told, was last seen going up a mountain, to come nearer to his deity. It is thought that he was absorbed into the Sun. Henceforth he was not seen among men.

Mr. Emerson's high principle in dealing with these people appears in this passage: "I will assume that a stranger is judicious and benevolent. If he is, I will thereby keep him so. If he is not, it will tend to instruct him."

But he established certain iron rules for the management of the pilgrims. No railing or wilful rudeness or uncleanness would he permit. In the autumn of 1871, some years after the arrival of the more wild and uncouth Reformers had ceased, a man short, thick, hairy, dirty and wild-eyed came to our door and asked to see Mr. Emerson. I showed him into the parlor and went to call my father, and returned with him, the guest had so wild a look. It appeared that he came from Russia, and very possibly the distance he had had to travel may have accounted for his very late arrival. He stood with his hat on: I knew that that hat would have to come off before spiritual communication could be opened, but wondered how it could be got off, as the man looked determined. My father saluted him, asked him to be seated and offered to take his hat. He declined and began to explain his mission. My father again asked him to take his hat off, which proposition he ignored and began again to explain his advanced views. Again the host said, "Yes, but let me take your hat, sir." The Russian snorted some impatient remark about attending to such trifles, and began

again, but my father firmly, yet with perfect sweetness, said, "Very well then, we will talk in the yard," showed the guest out, and walked to and fro with him under the apple-trees, patiently hearing him for a few minutes; but the man, who was a fanatic, if not insane, and specially desired that a hall be secured for him, free of charge, to address the people, soon departed, shaking off the dust of his feet against a man so bound up in slavish customs of society as Mr. Emerson.

What he says of Osman — the name that seems in his journals to stand for the Ideal Man, — by no means himself, but exposed to the same vicissitudes and acting wisely in all — might well describe his own history, so well did he live up to his thought.[1]

1841.

Journal. "Let it be set down to the praise of Osman that he had a humanity so broad and deep that, though his nature was so subtly fine as to disgust all men with his refinements and spider-spinnings, yet there was never a poor outcast, eccentric or insane man, some fool with a beard, or a mutilation, or pet madness in his brain, but fled at once to him — that great heart lay there so

[1] In the journal of 1841, under the name of Osman, this passage occurs: "Seemed to me that I had the keeping of a secret too great to be confided to one man; that a divine man dwelt near me in a hollow tree."

sunny and hospitable in the centre of the country. And the madness which he harbored he did not share. Is not this to be rich, — this only to be rightly rich?"

I have heard him accused of having seen almost divinities in the young protestants of that day — Sons of the Morning whose early ideal too soon faded. But if before noonday the cry went up, as in too many cases "Lucifer, Son of the Morning, how art thou fallen!' his faith in them was one hope the more left to them, and he did not lose sight of them when few friends remained.

1861.

Journal. "I so readily imputed symmetry to my fine geniuses in perceiving their excellence in some insight. How could I doubt that ——, that ——, or that ——, as I successively met them, was the master mind which in some act he appeared? No, he was only master mind in that particular act. He could repeat the like stroke a million times, but in new conditions he was inexpert and in new company he was dumb. . . . The revolving light resembles the man who oscillates from insignificance to glory, — and every day and all life long. So does the waxing and waning moon."

His earliest friend, Dr. Furness, said of Emerson: "If there was one thing more characteristic

of him than anything else, it was the eagerness and delight with which he magnified the slightest appearance of anything like talent or genius or good that he happened to discover, or that he fancied he discovered in another."

As for himself, his awkwardness, the supposed lack of sympathetic qualities, the inability to discuss and defend his statements among worlds-people, this "doom of solitude" and safety in it which he felt, that made him call himself jestingly a "kill-joy" in a house, and feel that it was an imposition on his host for him to make a visit more than a day long — all these limitations it is certain that he greatly magnified.

Though loving children, and with exceedingly ready sympathy for any visible hurt or wound, considerate to animals, and always

"Kindly man moving among his kind"

in village or travel or his own house, he was hospitable to the *ideal* selves of people, but utterly unsympathetic to their littlenesses and complaints, on principle, as he wished others to be to him. For sickness he had great horror because of its too frequent debasing effect on the mind. He said: "It is so vicious. 'T is a screen for every fault to hide in; idleness, luxury, meanness, wrath and the most unmitigated selfishness." He was by no means without long and trying experience of illness him-

self in his early youth. It does not do to judge by his written words of his action in this matter. He was far from being cruel or even unsympathetic in real cases, or those which he could understand, though his healthy temperament was utterly unadapted to deal with anything morbid.

To judge of Mr. Emerson the writer, or to compare him with others, is no part of my plan. But those who care for his results may be interested in the evidence which I can bring of his method and theory of work. He asked, "Can you sail a ship through the Narrows by minding the helm when you happen to think of it . . . or accomplish anything good or powerful in this manner? That you think [the scholar] can write at odd minutes only shows what your knowledge of writing is." He said that if the scholar feels reproach when he reads the tale of the extreme toil and endurance of the Arctic explorer, he is not working as he should, and he himself through all his life worked with constancy and concentration.

1851.

Journal. "To every reproach I know but one answer, namely, to go again to my own work. 'But you neglect your relations.' Yes, too true; then I will work the harder. 'But you have no genius.' Yes, then I will work the harder. 'But you have no virtues.' Yes, then I will work the harder.

'But you have detached yourself and acquired the aversation of all decent people: you must regain some position and relation.' Yes, I will work the harder."

But let no one suppose that he taught that mere activity and will can write the essay or poem: these only loosened the soul, as it were, put the mind in a receptive condition, and opened the inward ear to the great voices that

> "talk in the breath of the wood,
> They talk in the shaken pine,
> And fill the long reach of the old sea-shore
> With dialogue divine."

But what he "overheard," as he liked to say, must be written down and interpreted in the seclusion of his study. There he worked alone, writing, or reading with reference to his writing, usually six hours or more by day and two or three in the evening; and his recreations, his walks to the woods or his visit to the city and conversations with others, whether scholar, farmer, or merchant, were all sifted and winnowed on his return to his study for observations and thoughts: —

> "For thought, and not praise,
> Thought is the wages
> For which I sell days,
> Will gladly sell ages
> And willing grow old,
> Deaf and dumb and blind and cold,

Melting matter into dreams,
Panoramas which I saw
And whatever glows or seems
Into substance, into Law."

As, to receive a polish, the iron must be of good quality, so the scholar and poet must first be a man, know the ordinary lot and the daily chances of the race, but then read the meaning, not the surface appearances.

Journal. "I do not see how any man can afford, for the sake of his nerves and his nap, to spare any action in which he can partake. It is pearls and rubies to his discourse. The true scholar grudges every opportunity of action passed by as a loss of power."

His Concord life was no hermit's life, and though by force of character and constancy of effort and bravely saying No to many impertinent claims on his time, he guarded the time to do his work, yet labors and company found him out. In a letter to his brother William he says: —

"CONCORD, *February* 12, 1838.

"Now that the Boston lectures are over, comes a harvest of small works to be done which were adjourned to this day. 'Rest is nowhere for the son of Adam,' not even in Concord. The suds toss furiously in the wash-bowl. . . . [He tells of

an article for the 'North American Review,' to be prepared, reviews of Carlyle's books to be written, and his friend's last work (the 'Miscellanies') now going to the press in this country, and that his own Oration at Concord in 1835 is to be revised for a new edition; and continues]: And now I have to flee to Roxbury on a sudden call to pour out these decanters and demijohns of popular wisdom."

This letter gives a just picture of the distractions of those days, so numerous and constant that they would have undone him as a writer if he had had less power of will.

Of reading as a stimulus to writing (though far inferior to direct influences of men and nature, so that he always warned the scholar against too great subserviency, or awe for the reputation of any writer) he made use, but only when the richer sources were less accessible. But the bookish instinct of his race was strong, and even while speaking slightingly of reading he breaks off and says:—

(Journal, 1867.) . . . "And yet — and yet — I hesitate to denounce reading as aught inferior or mean. When the visions of my books come over me as I sit writing, when the remembrance of some poet comes, I accept it with pure joy and quit my thinking as sad lumbering work, and hasten to my little heaven if it is then accessible, as angels might.

For these social affections also are part of Nature and being, and the delight in another's superiority is, as Aunt Mary said [of herself], my best gift from God; for here the moral nature is involved, which is higher than the intellectual."

Society or Solitude? These were ever balancing their claims to his gratitude for service done him. Writing to his friend, Mr. Samuel G. Ward, just before his second visit to Europe, he says: —

"*March* 25, 1847.

"I am invited on some terms, not yet distinct and attractive enough, to England to lecture . . . and Carlyle promises audiences in London, but though I often ask where shall I get the whip for my top, I do not yet take either of these. [He had also spoken of invitations from Theodore Parker to take editorship of new Quarterly journal.] The top believes it can fly like the wheel of the Sisters with a poise like a planet and a hum like the spheral music, yet it refuses to spin. I have read in The Cosmogenist that every atom has a spiral tendency, an effort to spin. I think over all shops of power where we might borrow that desiderated push, but none entirely suits me. The excursion to England and farther draws me sometimes, but the kind of travel-prize, the most liberal, that made it a liberty and a duty to go, is n't to be found in

hospitable invitations, and if I should really do as I liked, I should probably turn towards Canada, into loneliest retreats, far from cities and friends who do not yield me what they would yield to any other companion. And I believe that literary power would be consulted by that course and not by public roads."

The reader who could better spare the English Traits than the Wood-notes or May-day will perhaps agree with him.

He had undertaken the task of speaking each year in the towns and villages throughout the growing country, to give the people high thoughts to help them amidst the turmoil, at a time when political speeches or humorous discourses or lectures on Temperance or Popular Science were expected.

Journal. "In my dream I saw a man reading in the library at Cambridge, and one who stood by said 'He readeth advertisements,' meaning that he read for the market only, and not for truth. Then I said, — Do I read advertisements?"

Almost all his essays, though modified before being printed, were first delivered as lectures, and he soon felt the need of guarding himself against any harmful effect of this circumstance.

"'T is very costly, this thinking for the market in books or lectures. Only what is private and

yours and essential should ever be printed or spoken. I will buy the suppressed part of the author's mind: you are welcome to all he published."

And yet when the stout Western farmer, after ten minutes' trial, got up and walked out of the lecture room, the circumstance always set the lecturer thinking not what was lacking in the farmer, but why he had failed to find the ear and heart of his brother.

But the lectures brought compensation in various forms: —

1846.

Journal. "What a discovery I made one day that the more I spent, the more I grew; that it was as easy to occupy a large place and do much work as a small place and do little; and that in the winter in which I communicated all my results to classes I was full of new thoughts."

When the lectures were recast into essays, the final revision was severe; he cut out and condensed heroically. He wished every word to tell, and liked to strengthen his sentence by omitting adjectives and superlatives. "Your work gains for every 'very' you can cancel." "Don't italicise; you should so write that the italics show without being there." "Beware of the words 'intense' and 'exquisite': to very few people would the occasion for the word 'intense' come in a lifetime." "Use

the strong Saxon word instead of the pedantic latinized one;" — such were his counsels to young writers.

May, 1839.

Journal. "Our aim in our writings ought to be to make daylight shine through them. There is wide difference between compression and an elliptical style. The dense writer has yet ample room and choice of phrase and even a gamesome mood often between his noble words. There is no disagreeable contraction in his sentence any more than there is in a human face, where in a square space of a few inches is found room for command and love and frolic and wisdom, and for the expression even of great amplitude of surface."

In his letter to Rev. William H. Channing written in November, 1851, discussing the question where to introduce some contributions from outsiders to their joint work (with Rev. James Freeman Clarke) on Margaret Fuller, he says: —

. . . "Only I hate to hear of swelling the book, and I think not Mazzini himself, not Cranch, not Browning hardly, would induce me to add a line of Appendix. Amputate, amputate. And why a preface? If eight pages are there, let them be

[1] "In a letter," he would say, "any expressions may be abbreviated rather than those of respect and kindness: never write 'yours aff'ly.'"

gloriously blank: No, no preface. . . . I do not mean to write a needless syllable."

As his productive power failed and his journals, the store-houses whence he drew his material, increased in number, his task became more perplexing.

1864.

Journal. "I have heard that the engineers on the locomotives grow nervously vigilant with every year on the road until the employment is intolerable to them; and I think writing is more and more a terror to old scribes."

The history of Mr. Emerson's progress in the poetic art may interest his friends and readers, and as in the many notices of him as a poet I have nowhere seen it traced, I venture to bring forward my contribution.

There seem to me to have been three epochs which I will call the youthful or imitative, the revolutionary, and the mature stages. From his early boyhood he delighted in the poets, but Apollo with the charms of rhythm and sonorous rhetorical passages first took his school-boy ear. Pope and Campbell seem to have been the early models. It is curious to observe, in view of the occasional defective ear for prosody which Mr. Emerson showed and carelessness of exact rhyme, that the early rhyming verses usually scan perfectly and

rhyme satisfactorily, though the blank verse more often halts. There is seldom a bold and original stroke at this time. His mind was of the order that awaken late. The personified virtues and vices and attributes of man do obvious things in these rather grandiloquent verses. The Class Poem, though simpler than others of this period, was of this sort. Sonorousness and an ambitious movement characterized this epoch. Here is an example of verses written at the age of seventeen: —

"When bounding Fancy leaves the clods of Earth
To riot in the regions of her birth;
When, robed in light, the genii of the stars
Launch in refulgent space their diamond cars;
Or in pavilions of celestial pride
Serene above all influence beside
Vent the bold joy which swells the glorious soul
Rich with the rapture of secure control;
Onward, around, their golden visions sway
Till only glory can obscure the day," etc.

This flight must have been one of the happy occasions which the youth, eager to ride Pegasus, referred to in the opening lines of a long poem: —

"Oh, there are times when the celestial Muse
Will bless the dull with inspiration's hues."

There is however an indication of having risen beyond the imitative period, and of the approach of Emerson's emancipation from tradition and new departure in thought in the following lines, though clothed in a most sophomorical complacency: —

"When Fortune decks old Learning's naked shrine
And bids his cobwebbed libraries be fine,
Young Merit smooths his aspect to a smile
And fated Genius deigns to live a while."

His poem delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Cambridge in 1834 shows a marked gain in originality, simplicity and vigor of language, and the Muse and the personified qualities and ideas, Hope, Memory, Passion and innumerable others, almost invariably present in force in the early work, are happily kept in the background. Still, the advance since the Class Poem of 1821 was not very great, and the tribute to Lafayette, who had just died, and the lines to Webster (printed in the Appendix of the posthumous edition of his poems) are the only passages of interest. The discouragements and bodily ailments in the years in which he studied for the ministry, the sickness of Ellen Tucker, her death, his own parting with his parish, and broken health and uncertain future were reflected in the verses written between 1827 and 1834. They are sad and introspective, although there are here and there gleams of happiness and beauty, as in the verses to Ellen, and some others in which his growing desire finds voice to become possessed of the power which he felt that the poet, of all other men, had in fullest measure, to reach the hearts of the human race. In these last there is no trace of the eighteenth century poets, nor even

of Milton and Wordsworth, who had influenced the verses of the years just preceding. He is coming to his own strength, and here and there are daring and fortunate flights, yet not sustained. It is strange to see him return to safe and monotonous heroics in the Phi Beta Kappa poem, when some scraps of verse (the beginnings of "The Poet") written before this time, showed freedom and power. He himself at the time spoke slightingly of this performance (the Phi Beta Kappa poem), but probably he felt that his new wings were not yet strong enough for a long flight.

But that year was the beginning of a new era with him. He had returned from exile with healthy body and mind, he had gone to Nature for inspiration and forever turned his back on all that was morbid. The self-dissection so common among aspirants in poetry he abhorred henceforth. He was now fully awakened and charged with life. A man must not live with his eyes glued to his navel. "Show me thy face, dear Nature," he cried, "that I may forget my own."

In the next ten years the greatest portion of his life's work was done, but though he felt that the poet was born in him, and by day and night yearned thus to give his message in this, the abiding form, he knew that the expression halted, and his first volume of poetry, by no means satisfactory to him, did not appear until 1847.

"Not yet, not yet,
Impatient friend, —
A little while attend ;
Not yet I sing ; but I must wait
My hand upon the silent string
Fully until the end.
I see the coming light,
I see the scattered gleams,
Aloft, beneath, on left and right
The stars' own ether beams ;
These are but seeds of days,
Not yet a steadfast morn,
An intermittent blaze,
An embryo god unborn.
How all things sparkle,
The dust is alive,
To the birth they arrive :
I snuff the breath of my morning afar,
I see the pale lustres condense to a star ;
The fading colors fix,
The vanishing are seen,
And the world that shall be
Twins the world that has been.
I know the appointed hour,
I greet my office well,
Never faster, never slower
Revolves the fatal wheel !
The Fairest enchants me,
The Mighty commands me,
Saying, 'Stand in thy place ;
Up and eastward turn thy face ;
As mountains for the morning wait,
Coming early, coming late,
So thou attend the enriching Fate

Which none can stay, and none accelerate.
I am neither faint nor weary
Fill thy will, O faultless heart!
Here from youth to age I tarry, —
Count it flight of bird or dart.
My heart at the heart of things
Heeds no longer lapse of time,
Rushing ages moult their wings
Bathing in thy day sublime."

Much of his inner life appears in the history of this ideal poet, his inspirations, obstructions, his strivings and experiences in his pursuit of the Goddess. If only for this reason his fragments on the Poet and the Poetic Gift, begun under the title of The Discontented Poet, a Masque, soon after 1830, and added to through his whole life-time, but never brought into form, — it seemed wrong to withhold, and with Mr. Cabot's sanction they were introduced into the Appendix of the edition of my father's poems published since his death. He usually calls the poet Seyd or Saadi, and he, like Osman in the journals, is now the ideal, now the actual self.

During the years when in his addresses to the rising generation, Nature, the American Scholar, The Divinity School Address, he was urging them not to tie their fresh lives to a dead past, but to trust themselves, or rather, the universal virtue and power which would well up in due measure in each soul that dared trust its aspirations, — most

of the poems included in his first volume were written. The tide of reaction against the academic, perhaps even the classic, was setting in strongly. The poetry of the day should be free as the singing of a bird. The song of the redwing rings out from the willows and gladdens the chilly April day, but what would it be if it strove to repeat the note of the European skylark?

But the tide of protest of those days, the so-called transcendental period, ran strong and sometimes carried Mr. Emerson into fantastic and startling imagery and rude expression. It is almost incredible that his ear and taste should have tolerated for an instant some lines in the Sphinx as it was first published in the Dial. He believed with Burke that "much must be pardoned to the spirit of Liberty," and he was very tender of the unregulated poetical flights of the young emancipated of those days, although these afforded an unhallowed delight to the conservative spirits who made successful and amusing imitations of the Transcendentalist poetry.

June 27, 1839.

Journal. "Rhyme; not tinkling rhyme, but grand Pindaric strokes as firm as the tread of a horse. Rhyme that vindicates itself as an art, the stroke of the bell of a cathedral. Rhyme which knocks at prose and dulness with the stroke of a cannon-ball. Rhyme which builds out into Chaos

and old Night a splendid architecture to bridge the impassable and call aloud on all the children of morning that the Creation is recommencing. I wish to write such rhymes as shall not suggest a restraint, but contrariwise the wildest freedom."

Then he had come to the conclusive belief that when the spirit moved, the thought came, the bard must sing; while he was at white heat the expression would take care of itself; that the impulse, the intoxication, if you will, must be trusted to find itself words, and that the force would be lost by elaboration; that power was almost surely sacrificed by too careful attempts at finish.[1] Of course then the chances in the lottery of making a good poem were made far smaller, if expression both strong and musical must come with the first voicing of the thought or never. Both the good and the evil of this theory show in the poems of the first edition of his first volume, best of all in the poems printed in the Dial, for much could not stand his

[1] When LEAVES OF GRASS appeared, at a later period than that of which I speak, the healthy vigor and freedom of this work of a young mechanic seemed to promise so much that Mr. Emerson overlooked the occasional coarseness which offended him, and wrote a letter of commendation to the author, a sentence of which was, to his annoyance, printed in gold letters on the covers of the next edition. But the first work led him to expect better in future, and in this he was disappointed. He used to say, This 'Catalogue-style of poetry is easy and leads nowhere,' or words to that effect.

own or his friends' criticism and was struck out or amended.

At this time he came upon the translations of the old Bardic poetry, the fragments attributed to Taliessin, Llewarch Hen, and even to Merlin, and he tasted with joy the inspiring wild flavor after the insipid or artificial fruit of England in the last century. He was reading too the rude chantings of the Norse Scalds and the improvisations of the Trouveurs.

Fortunately he had no affectation of ruggedness. What there was was sincere, like all his life, and in the direction of simplicity. A wilfully involved style, like Browning's later work, was odious to him. Even Brahma and Uriel, which are noted stumbling-blocks to those who come on them before they are familiar with Mr. Emerson's leading thoughts, which they embody (Compensation and Good out of Evil in the one, and the Universal Mind coming to consciousness now in this human vessel, now in that, in the other poem), are short, perfectly simple in construction and as Saxon in style as even Byron's best work. What Moore wrote of Campbell (and Emerson calls his best verse) expressed his own view of the race of poets: —

> "True bard and simple, as the race
> Of Heaven-born poets always are,
> When leaning from their starry place
> They 're children near, but gods afar."

Yet the poet must raise the people, not write down to them. "Sing he must and should, but not ballads; sing, but for gods or demigods. He need not transform himself into Punch and Judy."

First of all he must have something to say, then lay it out largely; a great design, not a pretty piece of upholstery. Then it must have the out-door wholesomeness, sincerity and cheer about it, for is not the poet "permitted to dip his brush into the old paint-pot with which birds, flowers, the human cheek, the living rock, the broad landscape, the ocean and the eternal sky were painted," and should he paint affectations and nightmares? From the first riot of freedom and rough spontaneity in verse, after the cramping models of his youth, there would have been almost necessarily a reaction, even had not this new fashion run into extremes in his own and others' hands which served the wholesome purpose of caricature. His own improving ear and taste felt the need of more music. To be treasured by mankind verses must not have weight merely, but beauty; rough pebbles must not be strung with the gems, even if seized in the same first eager grasp. The gems can be kept and laid by until that other lucky day when enough others are found to fill out the necklace.

"Substance is much," he says; "but so are mode and form much. The poet, like a delighted boy, brings you heaps of rainbow bubbles, opaline, air-

born, spherical as the world, instead of a few drops of soap and water."

Another influence now came in on the side of grace and finish, the Oriental poetry, in which he took very great interest, especially the poems of Hafiz, many of which he rendered into English from the German or French translations in which he found them.

The verses of the late period (after 1847) were long kept by him, and on fortunate days as he crooned the lines to himself, walking in Walden woods, the right words sprang into place.

1853.

Journal. "I amuse myself often as I walk with humming the rhythm of the decasyllabic quatrain or of the octosyllabic or other rhythms, and believe these metres to be organic or derived from our human pulse, and to be therefore not proper to one nation, but to mankind. But I find a wonderful charm, heroic and especially deeply pathetic or plaintive in the cadence, and say to myself, Ah happy! if one could fill the small measures with words approaching to the power of these beats. Young people like rhyme, drum-beat, tune, things in pairs and alternatives, and in higher degrees we know the instant power of music upon our temperaments to change our mood and give us its own; and human passion, seizing these constitutional tunes, aims to fill them with appropriate words, or

marry music to thought, believing, as we believe of all marriage, that matches are made in heaven, and that for every thought its proper melody or rhyme exists, though the odds are immense against our finding it, and only genius can rightly say the banns."

Almost all the poems of the later volume had been in years greatly changed and mellowed from the song struggling for expression first written in the note-book on his return from the woods, where I believe that nearly all his poems had their birth. But a woodland flavor remained: "Pan is a god, and Apollo is no more," and Pan and the sylvan deities were only half emerged from shaggy brute forms, and even the fair Dryads and Oreads had hints of rugged bark or rock-lichen in their garb.

Yet the first thought mainly gave the form, for, though in happy moments he bettered the expression, he taught that "verse was not a vehicle. The verse must be alive and inseparable from its contents, as the soul of man inspires and directs the body."

May-Day, Waldeinsamkeit, and especially My Garden show the result of this later, riper method.

The journal of 1856 shows The Two Rivers, perhaps the most musical of his poems, as the thought first came to him by the river-bank and was then brought into form.

"Thy voice is sweet Musketaquid and repeats the music of the rain, but sweeter is the silent stream which flows even through thee, as thou through the land.

"Thou art shut in thy banks, but the stream I love flows in thy water, and flows through rocks and through the air and through rays of light as well, and through darkness, and through men and women.

"I hear and see the inundation and the eternal spending of the stream in winter and in summer, in men and animals, in passion and thought. Happy are they who can hear it."

"I see thy brimming, eddying stream
And thy enchantment,
For thou changest every rock in thy bed
Into a gem,
All is opal and agate,
And at will thou pavest with diamonds:
Take them away from the stream
And they are poor shards and flints.
So is it with me to-day."

This rhapsody does not gain by the attempt to reduce part of it to rhyme which occurs later in the same journal: —

"Thy murmuring voice, Musketaquit,
Repeats the music of the rain,
But sweeter rivers silent flit
Through thee as thou through Concord plain.

"Thou in thy banks must dwell,
But
The stream I follow freely flows
Through thee, through rocks, through air as well,
Through light, through men it gayly goes."

At last the thought found its perfect form in

THE TWO RIVERS.

"Thy summer voice, Musketaquit,
Repeats the music of the rain;
But sweeter rivers pulsing flit
Through thee, as thou through Concord plain.

"Thou in thy narrow banks art pent;
The stream I love unbounded goes
Through flood and sea and firmament;
Through light, through life, it forward flows.

"I see the inundation sweet,
I hear the spending of the stream
Through years, through men, through nature fleet,
Through love and thought, through power and dream.

"Musketaquit, a goblin strong,
Of shard and flint makes jewels gay;
They lose their grief who hear his song,
And where he winds is the day of day.

"So forth and brighter fares my stream,—
Who drink it shall not thirst again;
No darkness stains its equal gleam
And ages drop in it like rain."

The representations of the beauty of the coast near Cape Ann, by his friend Doctor Bartol, led my father thither for a week with his family. The day after his return to Concord he entered my mother's room, where all of us were sitting, with

his journal in his hand, and said, "I came in yesterday from walking on the rocks, and wrote down what the sea had said to me; and to-day when I open my book I find that it all reads in blank verse, with scarcely a change. Listen!" and he read it to us. Here is the passage from the journal, which needed little alteration, part of which he made while reading, for its final form "The Seashore":—

"July 23. Returned from Pigeon Cove, where we have made acquaintance with the sea, for seven days. 'T is a noble friendly power, and seemed to say to me, Why so late and slow to come to me? Am I not here always, thy proper summer home? Is not my voice thy needful music; my breath thy healthful climate in the heats; my touch thy cure? Was ever building like my terraces? Was ever couch so magnificent as mine? Lie down on my warm ledges and learn that a very little hut is all you need. I have made this architecture superfluous, and it is paltry beside mine. Here are twenty Romes and Ninevehs and Karnacs in ruins together, obelisk and pyramid and Giants' Causeway, here they all are, prostrate or half-piled. And behold the sea, the opaline, plentiful and strong, yet beautiful as the rose or the rainbow, full of food, nourisher of men, purger of the world, creating a sweet climate, and in its unchangeable ebb and flow, and in its beauty at a few furlongs,

giving a hint of that which changes not, and is perfect."

There is a little poem in prose written in the journal of 1855, which, as I do not find it elsewhere, I will insert here.

THE YEAR.

"There is no flower so sweet as the four-petalled flower which science much neglects; one grey petal it has, one green, one red, and one white."

"Days" has been, by some readers, held to be the best of my father's poems. There is a remarkable entry about its production in the journal for 1852: —

"I find one state of mind does not remember or conceive of another state. Thus I have written within a twelvemonth verses (Days) which I do not remember the composition or correction of, and could not write the like to-day, and have only for proof of their being mine various external evidences, as the manuscripts in which I find them, and the circumstances that I have sent copies of them to friends, etc. Well, if they had been better, if it had been a noble poem, perhaps it would have only more entirely taken up the ladder into heaven."

Rev. William R. Alger tells me that meeting Mr. Emerson in Boston streets soon after the publication of May Day he expressed to him his

pleasure in the book, adding that much as he valued the essays he cared more for the poems. Mr. Emerson answered laughingly, "I beg you always to remain of that opinion;" then went on more seriously to say that he himself liked his poems best because it was not he who wrote them; because he could not write them by will; — he could say, "I will write an essay." He added, "I can breathe at any time, but I can only whistle when the right pucker comes." [1]

Having indicated the traces of his passage through the stages of his advance in the art of poetry, I shall venture to state in as short space as I can his feeling about the poet's place and duty in the world, or rather his high privilege. At

[1] Two poems are often ascribed to Mr. Emerson which he did not write. The first, called The Future is Better than the Past, appeared in the Dial. Part of this poem, beginning

"All before us lies the way,"

appears in several collections of hymns under my father's name. This was due to a mistake by the Reverend Doctor Frederic Hedge, who was one of the Compilers of "Hymns for the Church," from which it has been copied into other collections. The poem was contributed to the Dial, at Mr. Emerson's request, by Miss Eliza T. Clapp of Dorchester.

The second pleasing poem, of which Mr. Emerson has wrongly the credit, is one called Midsummer, beginning

"Round this lovely valley rise
The purple hills of Paradise."

It was written by Mr. J. T. Trowbridge.

large through his writings hints of this creed are found, but better even than in the long chapter on Poetry and Imagination, in the poems Saadi, Merlin and the fragments on the Poet and the Poetic Gift in the Appendix to the last edition of his poems.

The poet is finely sensitive to impressions from Nature and from Man. The beauty of objects and events is borne in upon him from moment to moment — observe, not mere objects, but their wonderful histories. "Natural objects are not known out of their connection; they are words of a sentence: if their true order is found, the poet can read their divine significance as orderly as in a Bible." He must render this beauty into words to gladden men elsewhere and at another time. To present vividly to their imaginations that which he has seen, he shows its likeness to some other fine thing or striking event which they know. The resemblances which he sees, new and unthought of but by him, make his hearer see what he saw. These images seem most fortunate: "The world seems only a disguised man, so readily does it lend itself to tropes." But soon he sees that these likenesses were far too fortunate to be coincidences, but due to the great fact that mind and matter have like history. "Detecting essential resemblances in things never before compared, he can class them so audaciously because he is sensible of

the sweep of the celestial stream from which nothing is exempt."

> "The things whereon he cast his eyes
> Could not the nations re-baptize
> Nor Time's snows hide the names he set
> Nor last posterity forget."

Nature symbolizes the soul, for behind both are the great laws. Action and reaction, attraction and repulsion, compensation and periodicity, and transformation and reappearance alike hold sway over man and nature.

> "The sun and moon shall fall amain
> Like sower's seeds into his brain,
> There quickened to be born again."

"And the poet affirms the laws: prose busies itself with exceptions, with the local and individual," but he, having taken the true central point of observation, sees that harmony and progress are the rule, as did Copernicus when he found that all the apparent perturbations and retrogressions of the heavenly bodies were due to the assumption of a false centre, and that, as seen from the sun, all would be orderly and harmonious. "The senses imprison us. . . . It cost thousands of years to make the motion of the earth suspected. Slowly, by comparing thousands of observations, there dawned on some mind a theory of the sun, — and we found the astronomical fact. But the astron-

omy is in the mind. The senses affirm that the earth stands still and the sun moves."

Thus the great "poetry is the only verity; is the speech of man after the real, and not after the apparent. The solid men complain that the idealist leaves out the fundamental facts; the poet complains that the solid men leave out the sky;" yes and the system in which grains of city dust and incandescent sun are alike motes.

Hence "poetry is the consolation of mortal men who have been cabined, cribbed, confined in a narrow and trivial lot." In it is

> "Something that gives our feeble light
> A high immunity from night,
> Something that leaps life's narrow bars
> To claim its birthright with the hosts of heaven,
> A seed of sunshine that doth leaven
> Our earthly dulness with the beams of stars,
> And glorify our clay
> With light from fountains elder than the day."[1]

By reading the law behind seeming fact the Poet cheers and points the way when it seems dark, as the guide who takes his course by the stars when the road winds and baffles him. Seeing the beauty and harmony of the universe and that our great solid earth is but a transient mote in it, our ideas are freed and we can look on death more calmly, surmising that "the noble house of Nature which

[1] Lowell's "Commemoration Ode."

we inhabit has temporary uses and that we can afford to leave it one day, as great conquerors have burned their ships when once landed on the wished-for shore." Even the poetry of sorrow has a charm for mankind. Thus happiness attends poetry; happiness not merely of the singer, but the hearer; and because poetry gilds the days, in rhyme you may say anything, even ideal truth, in the heart of Philistia.

At last the poet comes through poetry to central truth. For having found under manifold matter fewer forces, and under these a few great laws, the last step, uniting these, is to the essence, the Truth, Love, Beauty which thus expresses itself, the central fire of Thought and Virtue and Will of which his own is but a spark.

And this spark is not in vain, for is not the Poet too a creator, a Maker, as the Greek called him? "A poem is a new work of nature as a man is," and accordingly valued. "It must be new as foam and old as the rock." The poet takes "conversation and objects in nature and gives back, not them but a new and transcendent whole." Driven by his thought he personifies it, and in a crisis gives to the men of the street such a presentation of the Church or of their Country, that these once visionary abstractions become the realities that make life worth living, nay, even to be thrown as dust into the balance to save them: and a soiled

and ragged bit of bunting may outweigh with them a thousand bales of cotton.

And the true poet need not go back for picturesque subjects to mythical or classic or mediæval periods. He can take the passing day of the rushing, materialistic nineteenth century and hold it up to the divine reason and show the practical man whose eyes are on gingham or the county vote or the stock market the relation of these things to the far horizon that rings them in, and to the long "balance-beam of Fate;" — "the dry twig blossoms in his hand." "Perhaps they may think themselves logical and the poet whimsical? Do they think there is chance and wilfulness in what he sees and tells? . . . He knows that he did not make his thought. No, his thoughts made him and made the sun and the stars."

> "Ah, not to me those dreams belong;
> A better voice peals through my song."

A noble or fine thought, a piece of the poet's real experience given in a happy image, is the essence of a poem, and not a mere dazzle of words and melody, — a gay upholstery. The beautiful form is secondary, but should be implied in the beautiful thought, for "the act of imagination is a pure delight;" in this intoxication all things swim, the musical lines and words should come; for Nature, herself but the expression of Mind, by

her returns, of planets or of seasons, and her beautiful echoes to ear and to eye gives the hint of rhythm and rhyme.

"Every one may see, as he rides on the highway through an uninteresting landscape, how a little water instantly relieves the monotony: no matter what objects are near it, they become beautiful by being reflected. It is rhyme to the eye and explains the charm of rhyme to the ear. Shadows please us as still finer rhymes."

So metre and movement, rhythm and rhyme fitly and necessarily lend themselves to the poet when he celebrates the symmetry, harmony, the departures and returns, the correspondence and recompense, substance and shadow, life and death.

> "And through man and woman and sea and star
> Saw the dance of Nature forward and far,
> Through worlds and races and terms and times
> Saw musical order and pairing rhymes."

The beauty, the harmonies of the universe everywhere await the poet to celebrate them.

"Chladne's experiment seems to me central. He strewed sand on glass and then struck the glass with tuneful accords, and the sand assumed symmetrical figures. With discords the sand was thrown about amorphously. It seems, then, that Orpheus is no fable; you have only to sing and the rocks will crystallize; sing and the plant will organize; sing and the animal will be born."

But the ideal "poetry must be affirmative. *Thus saith the Lord* should begin the song." "A poet gives us the eminent experiences only, — a god stepping from peak to peak, nor planting his foot but on a mountain."

He felt that a better poetry was to come.

1851.

Journal. "There is something, — our brothers over the sea do not know it or own it; Scott, Southey, Hallam, and Dickens would all deny and blaspheme it, — which is setting them all aside, and the whole world also, and planting itself forever and ever."

The insight of a poet was the ladder by which he climbed to the plane of Optimism, the constant occupation of which by him disturbs some of his readers. And so his hope — or trust, as he rather called it, for there was, he said, a lower suggestion in the word hope — which was with him in his early days of poverty and sickness, grew until he felt that Uriel, the Archangel of the Sun, who from the centre of the universe sees all motion and tendency, saw that all things came in turn to light and worked for good and the great harmony. Even the comet flying off apparently in a straight line into space would in after ages return, as it might seem from infinity, and from another part of the heavens.

"Line in Nature is not found;
Unit and universe are round:
In vain produced, all rays return;
Evil will bless, and ice will burn."

This poem, written soon after his Divinity School address, might almost stand as the history of his promulgation of his steadfastly held belief of Good out of Evil, the study and illustration of which gave joy to his life. Although it can be traced in the greater part of my father's utterances quoted in this sketch, I will give a few more in special illustration.

"I see with joy the Irish emigrants landing at Boston, at New York, and say to myself: There they go — to school."

"Not Antonínus, but a poor washerwoman, said, 'The more trouble, the more lion.'"

"A man must thank his defects and stand in some terror of his talents."

"Hear what the Morning says and believe that."

"I cannot look without seeing splendor and grace. How idle to choose a random sparkle here and there, when the indwelling necessity plants the rose of beauty on the brow of Chaos and discloses the central intention of Nature to be harmony and joy."

"I find the gayest castles in the air which were ever piled far better for comfort and for use than the dungeons in the air that are daily dug and

caverned out by grumbling and discontented people."

"God builds his temple in the heart on the ruins of churches and religions."

"Trust the time: what a fatal prodigality to condemn *our* age; we cannot overvalue it. It is our all. As the wandering sea-bird, which, crossing the ocean, alights on some rock or isle to rest for a moment its wings and to look back on the wilderness of waves behind and onward to the wilderness of waters before, — so stand we, perched on this rock or shoal of time — arrived out of the immensity of the past, bound and road-ready to plunge into immensity again. Not for nothing it dawns out of everlasting Peace, this great discontent, this self-accusing Reflection. The very time sees for us, thinks for us. It is a microscope such as Philosophy never had. Insight is for us which was never for any, and doubt not the moment and the opportunity are divine.

Wondering we came into this lodge of watchmen, this office of espial. We wonder at the result, but let us not retreat astonished and ashamed. Let us go out of the Hall door, and doubt never that a Good Genius brought us in and will carry us out.

"As I stand hovering over this gloom and deep of the Future, and consider earnestly what it forebodes, I cannot dismiss my joyful auguries. For I

will not and cannot see in it a fiction or a dream. It is a reality arriving. It is to me an oracle that I cannot bring myself to undervalue. It is the cloud temple of the Highest."

My presentation of my father's life in the pictures here brought together of his daily walk among his own people and the thoughts thereby suggested to him will have been in vain if the agreement of his acts with his words has not everywhere appeared, — the symmetry and harmony of his life.

Religion was not with him something apart, a separate attitude of the mind, or function, but so instant and urgent that it led him out of the churches, which then seemed to him its tomb, into the living day, and he said, "Nature is too thin a screen: the glory of the One breaks in everywhere."

And so it seems hardly worth while to pick out from his writings chapters with names suggestive of religion or moral philosophy and group them to show his creed, as has been proposed since his death. Under the most diverse titles his faith in ideal truth and beauty and the supremacy of the moral law appears, though he turned his back on what seemed formal and lifeless. He said, "I look on sceptics and unbelievers not as unbelievers but as critics; believers all must be."

But when he was taken possession of by a

thought he took care to present it vividly, and, that it might burn itself in upon reader or hearer, he did not soften or qualify, feeling that he was showing an aspect, a single glittering facet of truth and reserving for another paragraph or even essay the other side of the question, the correlative fact. Hence his writings are particularly ill adapted for taking out a single quotation as a final statement. Churchman and Agnostic could each find in his writings an armory of weapons against the other, by culling sentences or expressions here and there. A superficial reading of one essay might mislead, but further study shows certain lines of thought that underlie all: they occur in early writings, wax as the traditional ideas wane with the growth of his mind, and before 1840 he seems to have rested in a security that could never after be disturbed in the main articles of his happy belief, and thereafter all that came to him but illustrated or confirmed or expanded it.

He believed in Spirit, not in forms, and said, "The true meaning of Spiritual is — Real." Those around him he saw anxious for the husk which hid the core from their eyes, but he said, If God lives, he is this last moment as strong as in the dawn of things; look then to the living centre and not to the deciduous clothing. The creature must have direct relation with the Creator and all interposition or mediation is a slur on the Almighty.

His experience of forms was that they cramped him; a growing tree must break the encircling iron band or suffer for it. In 1834, having shaken off what he felt as fetters to his mind and soul, and with body sound once more come among these fields where he could find the serene solitude that he needed, he sat down to study great Nature. Before he crossed the ocean he found his grief begin to heal in her presence, and in travel afar he had not found what he was seeking. He daily went out from the four walls of his study to his larger study in the woods, recorded what he saw, but largely, not as a final fact, — as it were, with a pin through it, — but as an appearance, a suggestion, a parable, surely with wisdom behind it. He saw light, flowers, shadow on solid rock, but what he noted was, that the light glanced, the flower unfolded, the shadow passed, and even the rock was crumbling under the tooth of the air to pass into soil, then flower, then seed, then man: that all was flowing and new each moment.

He saw what the Greek saw and embodied in the fable of the sea-god Proteus, who, when seized, changed rapidly from one form to another until the captor, bewildered, let his prey escape. Beautiful, healthy, self-renewing, ever-shifting life he saw was in all things, and he said, — What need of a break? This goes on. Here is the whole fact. Heaven is here and now, or nowhere and never.

He found that his best thoughts came when he was reverently passive, and that presently he found the same thought, or its counterpart, in a friend, and said, We are the vessels; the Spirit is the same.[1] "God enters the mind by channels that the individual never left open." Hence his essay on Self-Reliance, which has been called the lowest note in his philosophy, rightly read, is the highest note. He explains it, after his manner, elsewhere, and says that one comes at last to learn "That self-reliance, the height and perfection of man, is reliance on God."[2] And again he says: —

"A man should be a guest in his own house and a guest in his own thought. He is there to speak for truth; but who is he? Some clod the truth has snatched from the ground and with fire has fashioned to a momentary man. Without the truth he is a clod again."

His eye saw nothing but instances of existing, ever-renewed creative force, whether in the stars, or the Concord woods, or the working of the mind, and he reported it with delight, feeling sure that

[1] In his journal, after his oration before the Phi Beta Kappa Society in 1837, he writes: "It was the happiest turn to my old thrum which Charles Henry Warren gave as a toast at the Phi Beta Kappa dinner. 'Mr. President,' he said, 'I suppose all know where the Orator comes from; and I suppose all know what he has said. I give you — The Spirit of Concord — it makes us all of one mind.'"

[2] Anti-Slavery Address in New York, March 7, 1854.

this living faith must supplant what he called in his journal "the corpse-cold Unitarianism of Brattle Street." This was affirmative; that confined itself to "pale negations." More than this, he recognized the still small voice as God in us.

M. René de Poyen Belleisle said, "Whatever be the subject treated by Emerson, whatever be his position on the circumference, we are always sure that he will follow the ray which infallibly leads him to the centre; God is all, in all, and everywhere."

But the faithful were not ready and said, It is Pantheism. So it was, but of a kind that hardly differs from the teaching of Omnipresent God in whom we live and move and have our being.

And he saw that in nature Beauty was everywhere inseparable from living creation, and all his life held that there can be no divorce between high intellect and morals but to the loss of the former. Beauty, Goodness, Wisdom, became in his mind terms as closely connected, almost equivalent, as heat, motion, chemical action are to the physicist.

Nowhere have I seen so perfect an apprehension of this basal thought of all my father's work, the secret of the joy and calm of his life, as is shown by the late Sidney Lanier in his last lecture at the Johns Hopkins University, printed after his death in the Century Magazine (May, 1883), called Moral Purpose in Art. From it I quote the following passages: —

"It is most instructive to note how the fine and beautiful souls of all time appear after a while to lose all sense of distinction between these terms, — Beauty, Truth, Love, Wisdom, Goodness, and the like. Hear some testimony on this point. . . . Keats does not hesitate to draw a moral even from the Grecian Urn, and even in the very climacteric of his most 'high-sorrowful song'; and that moral effaces the distinction between truth and beauty. . . .

"'When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou sayst
"Beauty is truth, truth, beauty," — that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.'

Again, bearing in mind this identity of truth and beauty in Keats's view, observe how Emerson by strange turns of thought subtly refers both truth and beauty to a common principle of the essential relation of each thing to all things in the universe." [He quotes from the poem Each and All and goes on: —]

"'Nothing is fair or good alone:'

That is to say, fairness, or beauty, and goodness depend upon relations between creatures. . . . Let us now carry forward this connection between love and beauty . . . in a poem called The Celestial Love, where instead of identifying *beauty* and *truth*, with Keats, we find him making *love* and

truth to be one." [He quotes the passage beginning: —

"Love's hearts are faithful, but not fond."]

. . . "But now let me once more turn the tube and gain another radiant arrangement of these kaleidoscopic elements, beauty and love and the like. In Emerson's poem called Beauty (which must be distinguished from the Ode to Beauty) the relation between love and beauty takes this turn. Of Seyd he says: —

"'Beauty chased he everywhere,
In flame, in storm, in clouds of air.

. . . . . .

While thus to love he gave his days
In loyal worship, scorning praise,
How spread their lures for him in vain
Thieving Ambition and paltering Gain!
He thought it happier to be dead,
To die for Beauty, than live for bread.'

You observe *love* is substituted for *beauty* in the most *naïve* assumption that the one involves the other."

After what has been said I may well let the idle statement pass unnoticed that Mr. Emerson found his beliefs barren, and under the leadership of this or that divine wished to be taken back into the church; but let these extracts from letters written by him to friends, and, I believe, not elsewhere

printed, speak to the point whether he belonged to the Church Universal or no.

"CONCORD, *July* 3, 1841.

"I am very much moved by the earnestness of your appeal, but very much humbled by it; for in attributing to me that attainment and that rest which I well know are not mine it accuses my shortcomings. I am, like you, a seeker of the perfect and admirable Good. My creed is very simple, that Goodness is the only Reality, that to Goodness alone can we trust, to that we may trust all and always; beautiful and blessed and blessing is it, even though it should seem to slay me.

"Beyond this I have no knowledge, no intelligence of methods; I know no steps, no degrees, no favorite means, no detached rules. Itself is gate and road and leader and march. Only trust it, be of it, be it, and it shall be well with us forever. It will be and govern in its own transcendent way, and not in ways that arithmetic and mortal experience can measure. I can surely give no account of the origin and growth of my trust, but this only, that the trust accompanies the incoming of that which is trusted. Blessed be that! Happy am I when I am a trust; unhappy and so far dead if it should ebb from me. If I, if all should deny it, there not the less would it be and prevail and create.

"We are poor, but it is rich: as every wave crests itself with foam, so this can incarnate itself everywhere with armies of ministers, inorganic, organic plant, brute, man, angel, to execute its will. What have we to do but to cry unto it All-Hail, Good Spirit; it is enough for us that we take form for thy needs: Thou art in us; Thou art us. Shall we not learn to look at our bodies with a religious joy, and empty every object of its meanness by seeing how it came to be?

"But the same Goodness in which we believe, or rather which always believes on itself, as soon as we cease to consider duties, and consider persons, becomes Love, imperious Love, that great Prophet and Poet, that Comforter, that Omnipotency in the heart. Its eye falls on some mortal form, but it rests not a moment there; but, as every leaf represents to us all vegetable nature, so love looks through that spotted, blighted form to the vast spiritual element of which it was created and which it represents. We demand of those we love that they shall be excellent in countenance, in speech, in behavior, in power, in will. They are not so; we are grieved, but we were in the right to ask it. If they do not share the Deity that dictated to our thought this immense wish, they will quickly pass away, but the demand will not die, but will go on accumulating as the supply accumulates, and the virtues of the soul in the remotest

ages will only begin to fulfil the first craving of our poor heart.

"I count you happy that your soul suggests to you such affectionate and noble errands to other spirits as the wish to give them your happiness and your freedom. That the Good Heart, which is the heart of us all, may still enrich you with new and larger impulses of joy and power is the wish of your affectionate servant,

"R. WALDO EMERSON."

"CONCORD, *June* 15, 1842.

. . . . . .

"The wonderful spirit that streams through us, though in the prodigality of its flood it seems to stagnate in thousands of pools and ponds of dull customary life, never forgets itself, never pauses, but goes from greatness to greatness imperceptibly and in each individual uninterruptedly on, abolishing in the extent of the moment or thought all that we valued in the past; and though it takes up the Past into to-day, it has found in it new values, and uses what we slighted.

"The past thus becomes as new as the present and is still to change by new classifications, so that we are ever running backward out of the present wisdom; and thus nothing has an end, but every oldest fact and thought buds and blossoms and yields fruit in the garden of God."

In a journal occurs a draft of a letter to an old friend, after her conversion to the Church of Rome, written much later than the preceding letters. He says: —

"To me the difference of churches looks so frivolous that I cannot easily give the preference that civility should to one or another. To old eyes how supremely unimportant the form under which we celebrate the justice, love and truth, the attributes of the deity and the soul!"

His own last days were serene and happy as should befall such a life and such belief. In 1864, almost at the time when he wrote Terminus, his journal says: —

"Within I do not find wrinkles and used heart, but unspent youth."

Long before, he had written: —

"Old age, . . . I see no need of it. Whilst we converse with what is above us we do not grow old, but grow young. Infancy, youth, receptive, aspiring, with religious eye looking upward, counts itself nothing and abandons itself to the instruction flowing in from all sides. But the man and woman of seventy assume to know all, throw up their hope, renounce aspiration, accept the actual for the necessary, and talk down to the young. . . . Is it possible a man should not grow old? I will not answer for this crazy body. It seems a ship which carries

him through the waves of this world and whose timbers contract barnacles and dry-rot, and will not serve for a second course. But I refuse to admit this appeal to the old people we know as valid against a good hope. For do we know one who is an organ of the Holy Ghost?"

The following fragment from a journal when he was sixty years old was perhaps a fancy about the members of that favored company, the Saturday Club, as there is an entry on the same page about Charles Sumner's election to the "Saturdayrians": —

"In that country, a peculiarity, that after sixty years a certain mist or dimness, a sort of autumnal haze settled on the figure, veiling especially all decays. Gradually, year by year, the outline became indistinct and the halo gayer and brighter. At last there was only left a sense of presence and the virtue of personality, as if Gyges never turned his ring again."

While crossing the Atlantic for the last time homewards my father fulfilled his threescore and ten years, and his friend Mr. Charles Eliot Norton, a fellow-passenger, saluted him thus truly on that birthday morning: —

"TO R. W. EMERSON.

"MAY 25, 1873.

"Blest of the highest gods are they who die
Ere youth is fled. For them, their mother Fate
Clasping from happy earth to happier sky,
Frees life, and joy, and love from dread of date.

"But thee, revered of men, the gods have blest
With fruitful years. And yet for thee, in sooth,
They have reserved of all their gifts the best,—
And thou, though full of days, shalt die in youth."

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